A CONTEMPORARY STUDY OF MUSICAL ARTS

Informed by African indigenous knowledge systems

VOLUME 5: Theory and practice of modern African classical drum music

BOOK 1: Concert drum solos and drummistic piano solos

Meki Nzewi & Odyke Nzewi

Ciimda series

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Volume 5: Theory and practice of modern African classical drum music
Book 1: Concert drum solos and drummistic piano solos

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This volume is dedicated to Israel Anyahuru, my mentor,
musical spirit guide and friend. – Meki Nzewi

Contents

A contemporary study of musical arts I

Foreword IV

Theory and practice of modern African classical drumming 1
The drum 1
The bells 3
String instruments 3
Rattles and shakers 4
The finger piano 4
Panpipes 4

Concert, education and humanizing objectives – theory and practice 6
Rationalizing advancement 6
The psychological basis of African drum ensemble music 6
Advancement initiatives 7
Philosophy and theory of idiomatic categories in ensemble music creativity 9
Objectives of modern classical drum music 10
Oral solo drumming 10

Ensemble drum music 12
Classroom education in the African musical arts 12
Applied drum ensemble play-shopping 12
General 14

The written classical concert genre 16
Drum notation 16
Classical drumming exercises 17

Concert drum solos and drummistic piano solos 20
Drum solos 20
New Voice for Old Sound No. 2 *Hop Along* (Igba drum solo) 21
Ngedegwum 26
Oso na Ije 29
Onyedimma 35
Akasa Dance 38
Egwu n' Amu 43
Drummistic piano solos 46
Omaledo 46
Intermezzo: "Searching No. 2" 50
Intermission – Music: Searching No. 3 54

Foreword

The inventor of the bomb is idolized, a fantastic human hero
The designer of a wheelchair is taken for granted, another ordinary human
The bomb explodes, killing masses, maiming surviving few
The wheelchair provides human support for the maimed survivors
A sensible human world INDEED!
HUMPH! What has this got to do with the musical arts?

The typical African open-ended membrane drum is your soul mate. It is easy to communicate and relate to. It tunes your spirit and soothes your moods. It facilitates your bonding relationship with others. It massages your sensitive organs. It absorbs your strokes, and does not tell you what you do not want to hear. It regenerates your spiritual wellness and psychical health.

The drum is a commonly used instrument of musical arts practice all over Africa, which, over the ages, has captured global attention. The why and how of the African drum and the epistemology of drum music conceptualizations that compel such fascination, however, remain insufficiently explored.

There are many indigenous drumming traditions in Africa, and all share common, fundamental theoretical and technological principles. Every drum type or species, and its ensemble music theory, serve a specific objective in the culture of origin. The basic theoretical and scientific principles informing African drum-based music, however, manifest cultural peculiarities that are environmentally and historically determined. The variations in performance technique and tonal/sonic manipulation are derived from the technology as well as the sonic rationalizations that accomplish the utilitarian deployment of a drum or drum music type in a culture. The more technically and compositionally complex conceptualizations, such as those for the tuned drum rows – *ese*, *ukom* and *mgba* of the Igbo of Nigeria (Nzewi, 1977), the *entenga* and *namaddu* of Buganda, Busoga, Bugwere and Langa of Uganda (Wachsmann, 1965) – are rare and not under consideration here, in spite of modern notation symbols and classical concert compositional idioms having been developed for the Igbo drum row species (Nzewi, ibid).

The primary commitment during our years of research and advancement studies regarding African indigenous drum music conceptualizations and practices has been to discern the common philosophical, theoretical and scientific fundamentals, and to advance these for contemporary classroom education, modern literary concert performances, specialized group- or personal-therapy applications and other socialization as well as creative utilizations. We have designed a modern African classical drumming style that captures and updates the basic technical, creative and performance principles that underpin various cultural performance practices and compositional idioms. The theory and technique of modern African classical drumming thus imparts the generic principles of African drum music creativity, performance and humanistic deployment. A competent modern classical drummer trained in the written genre becomes automatically skilled to perform the oral genre, style and type of any African culture after brief orientation. That is because standard oral procedure is central to our training in drum literacy skill. A person who has already acquired classical music literacy can easily acquire the skill to perform music written for the drum or any other indigenous melorhythmic instrument. On the other hand, a competent performer of any particular style or type of African drum music cannot perform the written genre or easily perform other cultural drumming styles without the generic literacy skill having been acquired.

Some indigenous drum music styles and types in Africa are classical in their respective indigenous philosophical, theoretical and methodological formulations. We use the term classical in the sense of developing through a systematic approach to creativity that results in standardized theoretical and performance procedures such as mark indigenous musical arts types basic to utilitarian intentions. The indigenous conceptual and contextual imperatives inform the theory of structures and performance practice in the modern classical African drum music style specifically designed for contemporary contexts of concerts, classroom creativity and performance education, as well as applied **play-shopping.** [1] This volume provides essential expositions that introduce samples of our modern classical repertory. The philosophical and theoretical insights will guide a scholar, performer, teacher, learner, general practitioner/enthusiast or self-therapist who wishes to engage in African drum music practice with intellectual enlightenment. The discourse that prefaces the written compositions for each of the three series is virtually the same. Supplementary explication specific to a modern classical drum music category is provided as appropriate for the particular series. The texts provide epistemological grounding for cognitively appreciating the indigenous conceptualizations and configurations that inform the modern classical compositions and contemporary human applications. Volume 5 Book 3 on intercultural concert ensembles, basic to drum music theory has an appendix that samples the written testimony of music students brought up in the European classical music tradition, and who were introduced to African modern classical drumming in their first year at the Department of Music, University of Pretoria, South Africa. [2]

The written compositions in the three concert categories exemplify the imperative literacy procedure for contemporary advancement rationalizations. The theoretical procedures and compositional techniques are therefore markedly African indigenous, and only marginally derive from any period or style of European classical music theory. The compositions are grouped for publication in the following three categories:

Volume 5 Book 1 – Drum solos and drummistic piano solos
Volume 5 Book 2 – Concert duos (drum and voice/woodwind/horns)
Volume 5 Book 3 – Intercultural concert ensembles

[1] We prefer the term, **play-shop** to what is commonly termed **workshop** because it conveys our approach, which is derived from the original intentions, rationalized into the indigenous African concept of making music together: playful interactions that negotiate (shopping for) communal dispositions and salubrious spirituality while gaining knowledge. 'Workshop' evokes different attitudinal orientations.

[2] The reader of the three series in this volume may find it more intellectually illuminating and culturally enlightening to read the testimonies in the appendix to Volume 3 before proceeding with the introductory text. They are sampled narrative accounts of the experiences and reflections of first-year music students who completed the one-semester African music module "Introduction to African music" at the Music Department, University of Pretoria, South Africa. The educational methodology applied in the class prioritizes gaining intellectual insight through practically experiencing philosophy and theory.

Theory and practice of modern African classical drumming

The mother drummer quips to his audience: "Do you hear what the drum is saying?"

We start with a brief introduction to some African musical instruments:

The drum

- The drum from all over Africa can be discussed musically as an instrument that produces two or more primary levels of tone (not definite pitch). As such, the African drum is normally used as a singing or talking musical instrument.
- Indigenous drum technology carefully selects researched material components. Not all drums have a skin membrane as a component material part. Thus there are membrane or skin drums, wooden slit drums, calabash drums, clay bowl drums, and water pot drums.
- The wooden slit drum is carved out of logs of wood, and has two lips that produce different tone levels. African languages are tonal, and the musical interval between the two lips of a slit drum quite often approximates the primary speech tones of the culture group that owns it. The hollow in a slit drum provides the resonating chamber. Messages within a community or between linguistically homologous communities in indigenous African societies were coded and communicated by means of slit drums. Hence the slit drum is a surrogate language communication instrument, and the archetypal telegraphic instrument that relies on the tones and the rhythm of language.
- The calabash drum made of a single material could be a hemispherical calabash shell. Some cultures immerse the rim of a hemispherical calabash shell in a bowl of water for enhanced mellow resonance. The top and sides of the calabash are beaten with sticks or with the hand. The hollow enclosed between the empty calabash shell and the water is the resonating chamber. Another rare species of drum is a completely round calabash with a round mouth (sound opening), which bounces on a hard surface when beaten.
- The water pot drum is of two types. The type specifically conceived as a musical instrument has an opening at the base of the neck in addition to the mouth atop the neck of a normal water pot. Beaten with the palms of the hands, the manipulation of the side and top openings produces drum tunes. The other type is a large, ordinary water pot played with felt to produce a booming bass tone. This type is normally used as a pulse-marking instrument that keeps the regulatory beat that focuses the structurally differentiated layers of a typical indigenous music ensemble texture. Playing technique (open and closed strokes) produces two variant shades of the only available tone level.
- The membrane drum is of two primary types: the single membrane drum and the double membrane drum. The single membrane drum could have a mortar-shell (closed bottom) or open-ended wooden frame. The wooden frame of a double membrane drum proper must be hollow from one end to the other. Both sides are then covered with skin. There is a wide variety of both single membrane and double membrane drums with respect to shape, size, and material of shell. The hollow shell of a membrane drum could be carved out of wood, made of clay or of a large hemispherical gourd.
- Depending on the size and the construction of a drum, it could be played by stationary or mobile musicians.
- Open-ended membrane drums need to have the open end totally or partially open in order to produce the requisite quality of sound of the African drum. Hence some large, long-bodied drums that cannot be carried about by the drummer during performances are played slanted, supported by wooden sticks or the performer's body in order to have the open end slightly open. When a large, long-bodied membrane drum is played standing with the open end flat on the ground, only one muffled primary tone is possible unless there is a sound opening somewhere on the drum shell. Otherwise, open-ended membrane drums normally produce at least two distinct primary tone levels.
- The cultural area as well as the type of drum recommends whether a drum is played with sticks, hands, one stick and one hand or two hands and the heel of one foot, in which instance the drummer sits on the drum. Friction drums also occur.
- The membrane could be fixed to a drumhead by means of vegetable or skin thongs in a variety of techniques, or with wooden pegs driven through the skin into the side of the drumhead. In other instances, natural gummy saps commonly of vegetable origin could be used to gum the skin around the drumhead.
- A drum, depending on the species and size, could be played standing, sitting on the ground or on top of the drum, with the drum trapped between the legs/thighs or trapped between the armpit and body, particularly the hourglass tension drums, or hung over the shoulder. Very large drums would be carried on the head or shoulder by one person and played by another while the performance is travelling. Other types could be tied to the waist above the ground by means of a strap, and played while standing.
- The primary high tone level on a drum is an open stroke that is produced when the rim of the membrane is tapped or struck with the fingers. The primary low sound is an open stroke produced when the membrane surface is beaten towards the centre with the cupped or flat palm, as long as the base of the palm hits the skin. A sharp, held slap with stiff fingers at the rim also produces a primary tone level. Held strokes at the rim or centre produce secondary, muted tone qualities. Drums can produce glissando effects with a rising tone or a descending tone when rapidly stroked, while the base of a palm or a finger is pressed down and slid along the skin surface from the rim to the centre and vice versa.
- The African drum is a subtle melodic instrument. Tunes played on drums are created by the sensitive manipulation of the three primary levels of tone, as well as the secondary muted shades of tone possible on a drum species. This is comparable to combining primary tone levels and secondary tonal inflexions for semantic articulation of the syllables of a language in verbal speech. Hence the African drum of any species is a melorhythmic instrument, and is definitely not conceived of or performed as a percussion instrument. A melorhythmic instrument then plays musical themes that could easily be reproduced by the human voice as melodies that capture the

fundamental pitch-equivalents of the tone levels. The drum "sings" or "talks" when a rhythm structure is produced with a combination of the primary and secondary tone levels. Drum singing/talking is used as an effective pedagogic device in indigenous instrumental music education – mnemonic pedagogy. The drum may be deployed musically to produce percussive effects when a purely rhythmic pattern is played at only one tone level. The double-ended hourglass drum can produce a tonal range of about an octave. The smaller species of mortar-shell drums, such as the component drums of drum row instruments, produce only one primary pitch level with secondary shades of tone, depending on the striking technique. Tuned drum rows play melodies based on the scale of a culture's tone row system, and range from four to as many as ten component pitch-graded drums.

- The drum, basically, is a form of language simulation and communication technology. Drum signalling, which was common in Africa, is the prototype, rudimentary telegraphy. The idea of transmitting messages over distances by means of sound codes is an original African invention, basic to African musical technology and the science of sound. Knowledge of the coding indices (the tone levels and rhythm of a tonal language, as well as the provenance or context of the sound production) enabled cognitive persons to decode the messages.
- The drum equally is used as a surrogate speech instrument. In some African cultures, the drum instantly engages in a conversation with a speaking human (human verbal-instrumental voice dialogue), or transmits instructions or messages to designated persons within the context of a performance. When deployed musically, the voice of the drum, like the singing/reciting human voice, is revered as an indisputable spirit voice. Hence what the drum or an indigenous musician declared in music was regarded as a supra-normal message or command that had to be obeyed. Hence also, indigenous musicians specializing in the utilitarian music types were sacrosanct, inviolable, and enjoyed the status and respect accorded to religious priests in musical arts performance circumstances. Spoken words can lie and betray; indigenous music and dance are frank divine communications that reveal.
- In most cultures, drums may be used in pairs of different sizes and thereby provide primary tone levels played by different performers in music ensembles. One drum is designated as female, the other male. Most African cultures regard the larger drum of a pair as female. The female drum of a pair has a lower, more commanding tone and would normally play the ensemble role of the mother instrument that takes major solos and also talks. When drums are paired, the phrases or fragments played on the female and male drums in combination would generally complement one another to produce a single primary ensemble theme. Otherwise, the male acts as the support for the female playing the prominent or "mother" instrument role. In African indigenous ensembles, the instrumentation and structural rationalization of ensemble parts are commonly conceptualized to reflect the roles played by members of a typical African family. The drum ensemble therefore is structured like a normal human family in which the woman traditionally is the manager of the family. In some – not many – cultures the male-female designation is reversed for philosophical or psychological reasons. In some other cultures, three to four drums played by different performers could constitute the key instruments in a drum music ensemble.
- African musical instruments, including most drums, are carefully tuned during construction, and fine tuned before a performance. In the case of some drum types, tuning pegs are fixed in a variety of techniques. Tensioning strings could also serve as a tuning device, depending on how the skin is laced to the frame of the drum. Using a tuning mallet, for tapping the area of the skin where it is in contact with the wooden frame, raises the tone level during fine-tuning, especially for mortar-shell drums. Heating the drum in the sun or by the side of a fire is another technique for raising the tone level of drums with or without tuning pegs. Rubbing water or spittle on the skin of a high-tuned drum lowers the tone to the desired level. The tenseness or mellowness of the primary pitch of a drum would be dictated by the context as well as the human sentiments pertaining to its use. A drum furthermore needs to be properly stored after use.
- The pitch and "voice" quality of a drum that has not been played for a while rises or drops, depending on the type of drum and the atmospheric conditions that affect the skin. Normally an open-ended membrane drum is stored lying on its side in order to "breathe" properly (achieved by circulation of air inside the body) and retain its sonic quality and strength of material. In some African cultures, special drums are stored on a raft built above the fireplace to insure the "life" of the voice (timbre). The skin of a drum that is not played at all, and is not appropriately stored, soon deteriorates, but playing the drum enhances its "life" and "voice". It is advisable to refrain from placing objects on the membrane of a drum. The skin could be damaged.
- If a drum skin bursts or the lace snaps during a performance, it is replaceable. If the shell breaks or develops a serious crack, the drum is ruined as a musical instrument.
- Materials such as wood and skin for building drums are specially tested and selected. Some empowering/activating meta-scientific rituals could be mandatory during the process of constructing spiritually potent instruments. This could start with the process of procuring the materials, or could occur at the stage of deploying the instrument in public use. Certain types of resonant wood are preferred by various cultures, depending on the type and sonic potential of wood available from the local vegetation. Tested types of hard wood are commonly preferred for enhanced ambience and resonance. The skin of certain, not all, bush animals is preferred for skinning drums because of the special resonance it produces. The quality of skin for making drums depends on what the animal is seen to feed on. The skin of cows and goats is thicker and not as sonorous as the skin of certain bush animals, but could be used for skinning large drums that are played with wooden mallets. Skin that has blood in the veins is known to be the best for building drums because it is stronger and "alive", and thereby produces healthier sonic vibrations that soothe brain and body tissues. When blood has drained away from the veins in the skin, as in the case of an animal caught in a trap overnight, some decay may have set in, and the skin will be weak in material as well as sonic health. Such skin breaks more easily in performance. A drum made with inferior skin is easily recognized because the skin surface is usually flat and white, while the veins or patches of blood would be visible when a "live" skin is used to build a quality drum.
- The drum functions as a cultural object and a symbol. The particular cultural symbolism determines the size, shape, special materials of construction, sculptural embellishment, preservation, occasion and period of performance, as well as the cultural meaning of the sound that is produced, and who is qualified to play it. Not all the carvings on drums, especially drums made to attract contemporary curio buyers, carry significance; it may just be decorative artwork.
- In some cultures, specific drums are endowed with religious or political symbolism. The public appearance and sound of such a drum signifies the societal idea or institu-

tion that it represents. The domba drum of the Venda, for instance, is an ethnic symbol housed in a secret, highly protected location. It is not accessible to the public, particularly outsiders. The playing of the original domba drum thus has special cultural significance beyond the musical essence for the cognitive Venda person.

- The drum, generally, is an iconic metaphor in Africa of the union of the male and the female spirits – the skin is regarded as the essence of the woman and the drumstick or hand as the essence of the man. The physical interaction between the skin and the beater results in a potent action that gives "birth" to conducive or objective sound. This metaphoric rationalization concerning the drum prescribes the sex that plays the drum in a culture, and for what delicate or esoteric associations. More commonly, men as well as women who have reached the age of menopause play the drum. In younger women's musical arts groups, men would be required to play the drums, though females currently play the maropa drum in Pedi and Venda societies of South Africa, and in modern settings. The player straddles the drum between the legs and uses hands or drumsticks as beaters.
- The sound of the drum is conceived in Africa as elevated (spiritual) or psychical communion. The sound of the drum affects the mind in a manner that is psychically therapeutic or, if programmed accordingly, induces mood excitation. Depending on the nature of the sound, and the management of structure and form in the composition, automatic responses that range from physical activity to altered consciousness or sedation may be induced. Originally, a primary intention of drum music in Africa was psychic therapy enhanced by the manner of presentation and other ensemble components involving instrumental and thematic ramifications. The African drum produces healing sonic energy and also imbues and enriches benign spirituality. Hence it is used in various ways and situations in rituals as a healing musical instrument, for both mass and personal psychical health management.
- The tones produced on the drum generate raw or cluster harmonics, the healing energy of which massages the mind. Hence experiencing the right type of drum sound and music means undergoing metaphysical management of mental tension or other states of being.

The sound of the drum summons the community to share cathartic somatic energy. The drum is an agent of social-spiritual communion. To submit to the spirit of drum music is to share harmonious company and feelings with other humans. To imbibe the sonic energy of properly rationalized drum music is to experience spiritually elevating entertainment.

The bells

- Gongs are not indigenous to black Africa; they are metal discs, commonly of bronze, used as musical instruments in some Asian cultures. In Africa, bells are made by smiths, from flat sheets of cast iron processed by means of indigenous smelting technology. Africa boasts the largest species and variety of bells in the world. These bells are conical metal instruments made by welding two curved metal lobes along the lateral rims.
- Bells are more common in the West African societies and other societies that have a long tradition of iron ore smelting technology. Bells could be single, paired (double) or quadruple. The Igbo society of Nigeria probably has the widest variety of bells as far as technology and sonic or compositional potential is concerned. These bells range from single metal bells – small to medium large –to the large (giant) bell species that stand about one metre from the closed apex to the flared rim. Twin bells (male and female producing different tone levels) joined together at the apex and ranging from the small to the large species that could have religious symbolism are also found in this society. In some Ghanaian cultures, the double bell has mother-and-child symbolism (the mother carrying a child on the back, for instance the *gankogui*). In other species of bells such as found among the Igbo, the male and female are joined side by side at the apexes. The quadruple bell represents the most advanced Igbo bell technology and type of bell, and is constructed specifically for playing the specialized music of Ogene Anuka, a two-person orchestra in which the quadruple bell is complemented with a medium-sized double bell played by the second performer. The orchestra plays complex compositional structures with a six-tone scale and a number of additional tonal inflexions (Nzewi, 2000).
- Bells in Africa are melorhythmic instruments: a variety of tone levels and shades are possible, even in a single bell, depending on the striking and damping techniques. Double bells have two open-tone levels while quadruple bells have four open-tone pitches.
- There is much misunderstanding concerning the role of the bell in African instrumental music ensembles. The small single bell is often used as a "phrasing reference" instrument, not a time line instrument, as is reported in most literature on African music. The same single bell could be used differently in an ensemble as an "action motivation" instrument, like the double bells. The large giant-sized bells, as well as the quadruple bell, are deployed musically as mother instruments. The giant, single bell is normally a "rhythm-of-dance" instrument that outlines the rhythmic-eurhythmic essence of the choreographic rhythm and gestures of Stylized Formation dances. It also calls and directs dance sequences in solo dances.
- Bells are held in one hand and played with a stick or a padded striker held in the other. A single bell is also played with two sticks when it is clasped under the knee joint and deployed as an "action motivation" instrument.
- The bell is tuned during construction. The Ogene Anuka manufacturers normally use a standard tuning model for tuning a new instrument during construction.
- Bells made of cast iron are health-imbuing instruments. Special bell music structures were used for anaesthetic purposes by traditional orthopaedics who mend broken bones.

String instruments

- String instrument types range from the single-string bow, of which there are many varieties that are played as solo instruments or in ensembles or as private musical instruments for personal solace, to string instrument types with multiple strings. Bows may be bowed or struck. When bowed, rosin is applied to the bow. The bow is common to most cultural groups in Africa.
- Harps and lutes are more technologically elaborate and musically complex string instruments found in Africa.
- Some species of lute are indigenous to Africa. The guitar-shaped type is Arabian in origin, and has been assimilated into music making in the African societies that have

had extended contact with the Arab presence in Africa. The African lute is shaped like a truncated triangle with the sounding box fixed to the truncated apex. The strings are attached from a bar at the base of the inverted triangle to another bar on the sounding box. The box could be a hemispherical calabash shell or a wooden box, and the strings are of gut, palm ribs or other fibres.

- The harp is common among most cultural groups in West Africa. The kora of the Jali and Griot music cultural areas of West Africa is the most technologically advanced species of harp with up to 21 strings. The professional Jali and Griot music families play it. The kora could be played as a solo instrument, or in combination with vocal performance. A performer may start playing from childhood.
- Meticulous tuning is undertaken before a performance. African musicians generally are very particular about the proper tuning of tuneable instruments in an ensemble.

Rattles and shakers

- Rattles and shakers are classified as purely percussive musical instruments in African musical thinking. There are many different types and species of these instruments on the African continent, each with a peculiar sound production technique.
- The material for construction depends on what is available in the different natural cultural environments. Rattles are normally bunched hard objects – bells, seeds shells, sticks, animal shells, etc. – that produce sharp or jingling sounds when beaten or shaken. The quality of sound produced with rattles depends on the peculiar natural timbre of the objects that are bunched together.
- Shakers generally are resonant containers that enclose hard objects like seeds. When the enclosed seeds make contact with the sounding body of the container, harsh, percussive sound is produced. The quality of sound produced on shakers would be derived from the timbre of the sounding body. Containers range from wickerwork containers of many shapes and sizes, to gourds and calabashes and, nowadays, discarded metal containers or containers constructed by smiths. The species made from gourds is the gourd object covered with a net of hard seeds or other stringed objects.
- Shakers and rattles could be used as independent musical instruments on which purely rhythmic patterns are played with one or both hands. Others are sources of sympathetic sound and are worn on moving parts of the body (legs, hands, waist, chest, head) or are attached to other musical instruments such as the drum or finger piano. The rhythm produced by the moving or dancing parts of the body to which they are attached is made audible by these instruments. In other words, they resonate or translate the rhythm of dance movements into sound, or give sonic vibrancy to the physical movements of other instrument parts.
- Shakers and rattles belong to the action motivation category of African ensemble instrument roles.

The finger piano

- A finger piano is made of a portable sounding box or bowl with a flat board with a bridge on which prongs or lamellas are mounted in such a manner that the longer ends that are played are raised above the board. The length and thickness of a prong/lamella determines its pitch.
- The finger piano essentially occurs as a common keyboard instrument all over Africa. The sounding board could be a calabash or a wooden box/board. The number of prongs, which determines the available scale range, could be as few as four and as many as 25 and more. The most complex professionally used species are found among East and Central African societies, where double-deck species are also found.
- A finger piano could be played with the thumb or the fingers striking the prongs/lamellas downward or upwards, depending on the species and the culture.
- The finger piano is a soft-sounding, often personal, instrument. The sound produced by the prongs/lamellas is resonated by the sounding box. The finger piano is also used as a group music-making instrument, sometimes in vocal music ensembles, and could be further accompanied with rattles or shakers.

Panpipes

- Panpipes are not widely distributed in Africa. Indigenous panpipes are constructed from hollow vegetable tubes, while some modern varieties now use rubber, plastic or metal tubes. In musical terms, a panpipe is a construction of several tubes of different lengths (also diameters), and therefore pitches, which are stringed together in a raft in scalar order. The ends of the pipes are level at the blowing end, while the bottom arrangement could be oblique or "V"-shaped, or be arranged in any irregular shape dictated by the lengths/pitches of the pipes.
- A panpipe is a soft "voiced" melody instrument played by one artist, mostly for private music making. In South African music cultures, the *tshikona* of the Venda and the *dinaka* of the Pedi distribute such pipes to individual players in a note-producing order commonly referred to as the hocket technique, which may give rise to polyphonic texture. The *tshikona* and *dinaka* are ensemble musical performances with drum accompaniment, which involve dances as well as playing actions that compel movement.
- The number and combination of notes that make up a panpipe (stringed together or allocated to individual dancing pipers), as well as the scale or tone row of the tunes that are played, would depend on the scale or tone row system developed by a music culture.

African musical cultures have developed a vast variety of other types of wind instruments made from animal horns and bones, wood, shells of seeds and clay.

Then there are xylophones that are standard keyboard instruments suitable for the study of chordal-harmonic cultures in Africa, which range in complexity from the portable, solo-played types to the complex, *Chopi* xylophone orchestra of Mozambique (Kirby, 1934).

Drums of many types and species are commonly featured with virtually any other class of musical instrument. The dynamic level of the drum play in such indigenous ensemble/orchestra combinations would be guided by the dynamic potential of the other instrument(s) as well as the venue of a performance – intimate or open air. In contemporary African music studies and performances we have demonstrated that the African drum, being a most versatile and undiscriminating musical instrument, can be played in harmonious combination with any

other musical instrument – melodic, percussive, melorhythmic, key- or chord-sensitive – from any part of the world.

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Concert, education and humanizing objectives – theory and practice

Rationalizing advancement

What an ensemble music type intends to achieve in the society prescribes creativity and performance practice. Musical creativity, production and presentation in indigenous Africa are governed by standard practices and procedures. There is a systematic approach to the composition, choice and construction of musical instruments for an ensemble, and also principles regulating how, where, when and by whom a music type is composed, presented and experienced. Contemporary African minds are sadly bewitched by exotic modern religions and knowledge systems that are parallel in concept and content to the African prototypes, but which often are deleterious but fanciful imported goods and ideas that instil a consumer mentality. Our research, education and advancement commitments aim to regenerate Africa's indigenous knowledge systems in manners that emphasize the original intellectual mettle of the African knowledge heritage. The ultimate aim is to provide authoritatively African enlightenment and enrichment to the global confluence of human knowledge systems. Africa's prodigious knowledge lore and humane practices must not be relegated, or be allowed to continue weathering prejudices, misinterpretations and misperceived aspersions that threaten them with total obliteration.

There is an indigenous formula for creating ensemble themes that furnish the significant ensemble sound of a musical arts style and type. And every type or style makes epistemological sense and imbues human meaning in African musical arts conceptualization. Indigenous musical arts comprise applied arts and science. The form and structure of an ensemble or solo musical performance are directed at accomplishing prescribed musical or extra-musical objectives. Proactive aesthetics is a constant creative aspiration, irrespective of the utilitarian objective of any musical arts product. The fact of performed theory as well as the philosophical grounding of indigenous musical arts rationalizations must guide literacy advancement procedures. This is predicated on the cognizant discernment of heritage, which could then be cognitively refashioned to bestow human-cultural originality to contemporary scholarship and performance practices. The inescapable imperatives of the human cultural milieu in contemporary Africa mandates advancement initiatives that are literacy driven without compromising the seminal human merits (spontaneity in creativity included) that mark formal oral practices.

Negotiating advancement in scholarship and performance on the drum and related instrumental music mandates a written repertory and, therefore, the rationalization of devices for notation. A notation system that will be faithful to the indigenous epistemological principles must take account of the sonic peculiarities of the instruments. We have rationalized notation symbols for modern classical drumming within the ambit of representing rhythmic constructions in conventional music writing. The conventional rhythm notation is very appropriate for capturing the rhythmic configurations and performance sensitivities of indigenous African music. Our conceptualization and notation of drum music compositions for modern concert solo, duo or ensemble practices have incorporated the sonic-visual aesthetics of dance and the dramatic sensitization that mark indigenous models. Elements of sonic-visual theatre incorporated and notated in modern classical African drumming include finger snapping, clapping, chest pounding, and the use of leg rattles to accentuate the rhythm of feet (dance).

In conceiving and designing modern classical drumming, solo or otherwise, as sonic-visual theatre, we have taken into account the fact that music making is primarily experienced as a shared, inter-personal or communal activity in indigenous Africa. It is not normal to encounter solo drumming as a private musical event in indigenous African cultures. However, my foremost indigenous mentor in African drum music theory and practice, Israel Anyahuru, did inform me that an urge to play would seize him when he had not performed an engagement for some time. In such instances, he would indulge in solo drumming in the privacy of his room for personal psychical composure. The drum can be played as softly as a whisper and as loudly as a trumpeting elephant, and still communicate the desired psychical effects and affects. Modern classical solo or group drumming is conceived as a public musical event. Private solo drumming for self-therapy, which will also be discussed, does not require the theatrical dimensions of concert drumming.

Instruments of music found in African ensembles perform specific ensemble music roles, which are derived from the sonic character and technological features of particular instruments. The term, role, implies that the musical line played by any instrument in an ensemble is reasoned in human and social terms. In indigenous Africa, music is closely interwoven with how the society or community conducts its political, religious, health, economic, educational and social affairs. Everybody in an indigenous African community grows up with basic musicality acquired through obligatory participation, in any capacity, in appropriate musical arts performance sites from childhood. However, exceptional expertise is recognized even at a tender age. Knowledge of the context combined with performance expertise marks the role of the mother musicians, particularly mother instrumentalists who play mother musical instruments such as the mother drum types, some woodwind, keyboard and string instruments. Africa abounds with drum music ensembles, and there are various types and styles. The utilitarian objective of a music type recommends the instruments that are included in an ensemble, as well as the musicological content and the theatre of presentation.

The psychological basis of African drum ensemble music

The psychological objectives of African drum ensemble music are subject to two primary conceptualizations that influence stylistic content: to generate psychoactive affect (excitation drumming), and to induce composure or a transcendental state of being (contemplative drumming). The rationalization of the instruments in an ensemble, the compositional structures, the density or sparseness of texture, the thematic development technique, and the form and theatre for presentation, all derive from the psychological objectives basic to the context that prescribes the creation or performance of the music.

The musical arts as a systemic product was strategic to preventive health care, and targeted management of the healthy mind of every individual on the principle that a healthy mind induces a healthy body, and thereby healthy community living. The material and technology of indigenous musical instruments generate raw (cluster) harmonics that characterize melorhythmic sound energy. Raw harmonics that subtly massage sensitive body tissues, particularly brain tissues, combined with the science of sonic structures induces psychical health. The proliferation of crimes of all sorts from the sophisticated, conglomerate boardroom to the crude, street and home criminalities, and thereby inhumanity is as a result of pandemic psy-

chical ill-health (diabolic spirituality) inflicting the contemporary human world everywhere. The imperative of free-spirited, self-expressive dancing as a component of musical arts making particularly engenders psychophysical health.

The applied objective of an indigenous drum ensemble music type determines the two styles of drumming that have been categorized, from psychological intentions, as psychoactive or excitation drumming (cathartic effect) and contemplative drumming (sublime effect). In contemporary experience, African drum music has been generally misunderstood and, thereby misrepresented as euphoric drumming by Africans who have received a modern education and adhere to a modern religion. Euphoric or self-consumed (Ego) drumming was not common in indigenous Africa, even in children's playgroups. It is a contemporary misperception and corruption of psychoactive drumming commonly promoted in pop music and "drum workshops" that lack serious intent and theoretical as well as psychological health underpinning.

In the global imagination engaged with African music, the *djembe* drumming style and ensemble of some West African societies are thought to represent standard practice and expertise in terms of technical display and instrumentation. This is primarily because the exhibitionistic style of *djembe* performance that was necessitated by its specific indigenous cultural meaning has been abstracted and re-invented to suit modern superstar fancies. The reason is also because the artistic features of indigenous *djembe* drum style, when isolated from its societal-human context, are comparable to the Northern Hemispheric performance philosophy of professionalism and individualism. These are marked by an obsessive display of ego, as well as entertainment aspirations not ballasted by extra-musical intentions and humanizing contexts for creativity and performance. European-American patrons and promoters have globally misrepresented African drummers and drumming styles in manners that perceptually confuse the indigenous African conceptualization of drum music as tune making with the European classical music idea of percussion as sheer rhythmic fantasy and ecstasy. The technology and musical conceptualization of the typical African drum, which makes it a melorhythmic (tone-level sensitive) instrument, requires the playing of tone-based tunes that can be sung.

Psychoactive or excitation drumming

Psychoactive drumming could produce a transcendental effect in given contexts, particularly in susceptible/receptive participants and sometimes through autosuggestion. The density of linear texture that is sustained over the performance time expels the self-consciousness or self-presence of a subject, and could induce a state of altered consciousness. This could be accompanied by the manifestation of benign spirit essences that ride the psyche of a targeted persona, or other transcendental behaviour/actions – individual or group. Psychoactive drum ensemble music generally marks action-oriented music types and, according to the cluster harmonic science of melorhythmic instruments, also affects the human mind when applied to psychical healing or transformation.

Contemplative drumming

The quintessence of the salubrious art of African drumming is the contemplative drumming style, which may interpose excitation drumming when needed, to create emotional and psychical balance. The science interplays physical/psychical tension and catharsis in accordance with African dualistic philosophy of life that informs creative theory and psychology. The interplay of tension/excitation and calmness/contemplation also is a basic artistic principle of form common in African indigenous musical arts presentation. The objective of contemplative drum music, which informs the structural configuration, could be verbal language communication (drum telegraphy or dialogue between a drum and a speaking human voice); curative (drum music for personal or group therapy); group cohesion or team bonding; and the remedying of both self-inhibitive (extreme self-withdrawal) and extroverted (overly self-assertive) personality traits. The *djembe* drum ensemble style is ideal for mass psychic catharsis.

Both contemplative and excitation drumming frequently occur in the Western and Central African cultural areas of Africa. In contemporary southern Africa, the drum music intention and tradition exemplified by the density of *Sangoma* drumming strategize therapeutic and psychical transformation structures. [3] Psychoactive *Sangoma* drumming and the poetic dancing that it generates and underlines have healing potency in indigenous medical science. Poetic dancing is a primary concept of dance in Africa south of the Sahara. Contemplative drumming has "classical" dimensions in terms of the systematic conformation and development of basic structural elements, as well as the presentational form. The classical (contextual) form for creativity and presentation in drum music is marked by an extremely elaborate conformation in the *ese* music of the Igbo of Nigeria. *Ese* music has five compartments (movements) that match the five thematic subdivisions of the funerary scenario for meritorious adult men, which it marshals. Each compartment is identified by peculiar thematic, structural and mood characteristics, as well as a prescriptive theory of compositional procedure. The mother musician sonically conducts formalized contextual activities that transpire within each compartment.

Advancement initiatives

We have been engaged in researching and advancing the theory and practice of African drum music, both solo and ensemble, in the Ama Dialog Foundation for Africa & the World Arts in Nigeria, from a literacy perspective, since 1993. The research results have been applied in various play-shopping programmes and contemporary classical concert compositions. Research based in the Ama Dialog Foundation has resulted in designing African modern classical drumming for single membrane drum and tuned drum row types. Simple notation systems have been devised, and written concert repertory have been produced – drum solos, drummistic piano solos, duos for the drum and violin/wind instruments/voice, inter-cultural ensembles for mixed African indigenous and European classical instruments including the voice, as well as choral works derived from African indigenous vocal conformations, and symphonic works. African classical drumming concerts (solo, duo with voice/classical instruments and intercultural ensembles) featuring modern trained singers and European classical instrumentalists have been given in parts of Europe and Africa. Modern classical drumming has now become an instrumental performance specialization in the Music Department of the University of Pretoria, South Africa. At CIIMDA[4] (Centre for Indigenous Instrumental Music and Dance Practices of Africa – Research, Education and Performance for SADC countries), we are focusing on the theory and practice of drum and dance ensembles that have mobilized concert activities by learners in the schools system.

Personal drumming, psychoactive and contemplative, is a salubrious experience whether self-administered to induce sleep (soporific therapy), or to contain anxiety, or to indulge crea-

[3] The *Sangoma* drumming style is explained in the brochure accompanying the DVD titled "*Sangoma* Dance Aesthetic – Choreographing spirituality" produced by Nzewi (2005) in CIIMDA.

[4] The government of Norway, through the Norwegian Foreign Office, funds CIIMDA under a Framework for Cooperation (2004-2008) with the Rikskonsertene (Norwegian Concert Institute). CIIMDA is based in Pretoria, South Africa.

tive fantasy that relaxes and stimulates the mind. Otherwise drum ensemble music constructs community, in the context of which a number of specialized contemporary applications have been designed. The theory and method that we apply to both oral and literary drum musical performances are modern classical, and rely on the basic playing techniques and creative principles informed by indigenous epistemology.

Some basic principles are emphasized in ensemble and solo drumming activities for modern music-making options.

Modern classical drumming

This implies the reorientation of drum ensemble music practice distilled from the indigenous philosophical and theoretical conceptualizations, which advances the playing technique as well as recognizes the contemporary literary imperative. This volume focuses on the open-ended single membrane drum that is prevalent in African indigenous cultures. The species suitable for modern classical drumming should produce three clear, primary tone levels *cum* timbre qualities – the deep, the high and the slapped notes. The popular *djembe* drum of some West African cultural groups is versatile and ideal for oral drumming because of its distinct primary tones. It is not recommended for literacy modern classical drumming, however. A drum with an unencumbered wooden shell is more suitable because the shell is struck with a ringed finger to produce one of the primary notes we have incorporated for literary classical drumming.

Modern classical drumming requires the performer to sit on a chair without armrests, in such a manner that the spine is upright, ensuring a straight back and shoulders. While an open-ended drum should be resting on the ground when played, the open end, the "mouth" or base, must not be flat on the ground, otherwise the sound that is produced will be trapped within the drum, and the quality of tone muffled. However, openings for sound to escape could be provided at the open base of the drum shell during construction. The drum is held between the legs with the membrane at the top, the drumhead tilted outwards, away from the performer. An opening (a "mouth") is thus provided between the base of the drum and the floor, so that a clear tone becomes possible. The feet of the player must rest flat on the ground so that the performer can physically mark the pulse with one or both legs. A player whose pulse-sense is still insecure is advised to actually "walk" the pulse of the music, fairly lifting one or both legs up and down evenly and steadily. In community ensemble playing it is advisable that all performers uniformly mark the common pulse visually and physically by tapping or "walking" the feet. This simulates basic dance steps, inalienable from indigenous musical arts performance principles, particularly in literary drum playing. In group playing, which often entails differentiated individual thematic contributions, physically marking the pulse simultaneously, induces the common pulse feeling that ensures unified community action. It is not advisable to have a conductor who is not playing an instrument in indigenous or modern drum ensemble music that emphasizes the physical group pulse feeling for systematic musical flow. When necessary, particularly as required for playing written drum music, the drum should be secured to the waist with an adjustable strap so that the legs are free to play the leg shakers that simulate dance in the musical score.

The open-stroking technique, in which the hand or stick bounces off the drumhead on impact, allows the skin to vibrate freely and fully to produce clean tones on the drum. A held stroke technique, during which the hand or stick rests on the skin briefly on contact and therefore inhibits free vibration of the membrane, no matter how briefly, mutes the desired tone quality. Ordinarily it is regarded as a poor playing technique that should be avoided. A held stroke may be desired specifically for the slap tone, or for special tonal inflection such as may mark the "full stop" at the end of a melorhythmic statement. Playing from the wrist with a flexed wrist action is recommended. It is not advisable to play with the forearm, with a stiff wrist lifting up and down, as this could incur fatigue and is not visually aesthetic in drum playing. The drum is a best friend that must be coaxed with firm friendly stroking to "sing" as softly and as loudly as desired. The performer must not batter or fight with the drum. Alternate use of the hands is a must, unless the technical demands of a special musical figure commands striking successfully with only one hand. Playing with alternating hands has health implications: it balances the psyche of the performer, and is visually graceful. How the drum is played affects the psychical health of a performer as much as the phrasing of the thematic configuration that is played on the drum. The African drum is a proud instrument that can sound calmly and powerfully, and sitting with straight shoulders while playing with alternate hands, with the arms free from the armpits, enhances the proud visual aesthetic of the performer.

Melorhythmic tunes rely on tone levels that have pitch essence as well as the sonic potential of particular species of wood used in drum construction. The sound of the drum shell is conceived as a component note of melorhythmic compositions. Four primary notes therefore are possible for playing tunes on the drum for general drumming – three levels of tone on the drum membrane and one on the drum shell. These are again highlighted here:

- The clear deep tone (open stroke) is produced with cupped hands striking the centre of the drumhead in such a manner that the base of the palm makes contact with the skin and bounces off. A held stroke that stops the skin from vibrating freely on impact is sometimes used for tonal effects or to end a piece or theme.
- The clear high tone is produced when the rim of the drumhead is struck with fingers straight and held together tightly, and played as a bounce-off or open stroke. (A skilled player could actually produce the same quality of tone at any dynamic level using a finger and striking from the wrist as already advised.)
- The slap is a primary tone that is produced at the rim of the drumhead when the straight and tightly held fingers actually slap a held stroke so that vibration of the skin is limited. Playing with a strong flick of the wrist enhances the desired sharpness of a slapped tone, and additionally exercises the wrist.
- When the drumhead is played with a padded stick, the centre is struck with the drumstick, to produce a primary note. A held stroke at the centre with the drumstick gives a muted tonal timbre of the fundamental tone of the open stroke. When a drum is played with two sticks or one stick and one hand, a primary note is produced when the stick is used to strike the wooden shell of the drum. Again playing from the wrist is advisable. In literary solo drumming, the stick is replaced with a strong metal ring worn on the middle or first finger of the left hand. The ring strikes the wooden shell for a primary tone in addition to the hand being used for other primary notes already discussed.
- The clap is an essential note combined with the other drum notes for composing melorhythmic structures in modern classical drumming.
- A glissando effect, respectively rising and falling, is produced by sliding a finger or fingers, or the base of the palm of one hand, up and down the drumhead with sensitivity for note-duration while rapidly repeated strokes are played with the finger/fingers of the free hand.

The playing techniques and notes discussed above for melorhythmic compositions apply both to oral modern classical drumming and literary drumming. Literary drumming, however, incorporates more notes and will be discussed later.

Philosophy and theory of idiomatic categories in ensemble music creativity

Composing music in the indigenous idiomatic configurations entail creating and manipulating intangible realities that imperceptibly influence attitudinal dispositions and relational habits. In indigenous Africa everybody is assumed to possess a basic acumen for musical creativity and should, as such, be capable of composing original tunes. If a person denies such innate genius, it will not serve her/him. Skill in playing the drum develops with practice, just as in other musical instruments. The following discussions are faithful to the indigenous drum ensemble principle that music making should effectuate utilitarian intentions at the same time as it conceptually implicates entertainment or recreational objectives. The nature of themes and how they are combined and developed in a composition would depend on the function the music is intended to serve in the society or group. Thus the configuration of idiomatic categories must make sense, structurally and formally, at the same time as they negotiate contextual meaning. The following idiomatic principles, which are not necessarily exclusive musical conceptualizations, inform the theory of indigenous ensemble music compositions, bearing in mind that an individual can constitute her-/himself into an ensemble. This implies that an experienced individual performer can synthesize an ensemble piece, that is, evoke community participation in a monoplay, while the musical sense of the ensemble concept will still be clear. Conversely, a solo piece can be arranged for performance by an ensemble without compromising the significant theme and sound.

The principle of thematic complementation – creating and sharing thematic space or complementary phrasing

A musical statement could make provision for two or more persons to share the structural configuration in a linear dimension in the first instance. This minimal collaboration generates a sense of sensitively binding with another person or persons to accomplish a spiritual-human objective. The structure that is shared constitutes a primary thematic sense or the significant sound of a piece. The segments contributed by sharing partners may not be of equal duration or size, but each input, no matter how small or large, is essential for the thematic integrity of the musical statement. The length of the significant theme for this sharing of inter-personal stimulation could be a bar or two in 12/8 or 4/4 metre. The spontaneous compositional dialogue could also be of two independent but complementary thematic identities that linearly constitute a composite thematic identity for developmental activities, as discussed below. Whether shared or independent, the significant theme/s should first be looped in a circle that repeats, and each individual or group contributor must be acutely conscious of the point of entry and exit in the circle. Thereafter, a number of developmental options are possible:

- The complementing partners could begin to create their own compatible patterns for filling in sections where each is normally silent in the shared realization of the significant tune. The fill-in patterns form a secondary layer of musical phrases that enrich the overall musical texture. A spontaneous or fixed fill-in pattern must not compromise the correct entry point for playing one's section of the shared primary statement. Thus alertness and acute awareness of the human and structural sense and the contribution of collaborating with others are sensitized. If not, a disruption of the significant sense of the piece or any joint human objective could occur.
- The contribution could entail the sharing partners each spontaneously varying the content of their respective segments at their own discretion. When the content of a thematic fragment or gestalt is varied without obliterating its significant sense, the replaying of the circle becomes a recycling experience. Internal variation could be combined with the developmental option of fill-in patterns. Each player's recreation of an own thematic segment relies on an internal variation technique while the filling-in exercise is an external development technique.

Opening up and sharing musical space in melodic, melorhythmic or rhythmic constructions that mark African indigenous creative theory thus inculcates the virtue of recognizing and respecting the human sensibility and contribution of collaborating with others. The above sharing options could involve partners playing the same or different types or species of instruments such as two or three drummers, a drummer and a flautist, and so on. Sharing linear structures implicates opening and sharing personal space, which compels sharing or bonding humanity. Two persons involved in internal variations of respective parts would be engaging in mutual, spontaneous creative stimulation. It could be quite demanding to create variants of such a minuscule fraction of a theme, which could be as brief as two quarter note beats in duration. The exercise, especially working with a partner, could generate a sense of achievement and, thereby, spiritual elation. The commonly known African responsorial structures of chorus and solo, or question and answer, are basic to creating space for others to emerge or be heard. The principle is informed by the indigenous philosophy of becoming humanized by sharing with fellow humans what a person could ordinarily accomplish alone and in loneliness. A responsorial game could also make use of two independent themes constituting a cycle. The developmental options identified above would also apply.

The principle of matching compatible themes in horizontal harmonious reckoning

Two or more compatible but independent themes of the same or different lengths could be played simultaneously to yield the significant sound of a piece. Compatibility in terms of belonging to the same metric framework, and blending harmoniously in conformity with a culture's vertical harmonic idioms. Such complementary matching themes could be played on the same or different types of instruments used in an ensemble. Matching themes do not necessarily need to be of equal length, but must have a ratio of relationship. For instance, one thematic identity could sound twice in the time frame of the other; or the ratio of durational relationships could be 2:3, 1:4, etc. The ratio has consequences for the basic horizontal harmonic scheme of the significant sound of an ensemble piece. It is possible that the composite sound of a piece could be made up of three or more thematic identities that have different lengths. This gives rise to the theory of the Ensemble Thematic Cycle, ETC. [5] It is important that the common starting point of an ensemble piece is clearly defined, whether on the principle of theme sharing or of matching themes. There is always a common starting point for any number of instruments that are contributing themes of varied lengths to the ETC of a piece in an indigenous ensemble.

Performing self within community solidarity

A compositional principle for an ensemble could provide for a reiterated composite ensemble theme that forms the pillar or textural framework on which individuals could take turns to spontaneously exercise compositional or improvisational freedom. It could be discussed as a theory of free improvisation/extemporization over a recurring block of sound in an ensemble. The contemplative/emotive interest would then be on the free improvisation while the

[5] See Nzewi, M. 1997: *African music: Theoretical content and creative continuum*. Oldershausen: Institut fur Didaktik popularer Musik.

motive/free medley dance interest is on the regularly recurring textural-harmonic block that could feature internal variations given experienced performers.

Performing attentive listening

This drum ensemble game sensitizes group attentiveness. An originator spontaneously plays continuously changing melorhythmic themes, each of which is immediately reproduced exactly by other members of a play-shopping group. All the themes that may or may not be related must be of equal duration, so that, the point in the time loop for an exact repeat by the group is regular. The originator manages space within the time frame for creative explorations while the group must always come in at the exact same spot in the recycled thematic loop. This exercise primes the participants with regard to consciousness of the metric sense. As such, both originator and members of the play-shopping group must be marking a common pulse with the feet. Participants in a play-shopping session who are competent drummers could take turns playing the role of the originator. At the initial stages, a particular theme that is not accurately reproduced, rhythm *cum* tone level, by a majority of participants could be repeated until skill in keen listening and exact reproduction is developed. This is an exercise that is strategic in aural training and spontaneity, to stimulate acuity in listening and pattern perception, as a change in sound could be as minute as an eighth-note or an altered tone level of a preceding pattern.

Creative spontaneity in chorus-solo framework

The group should play a consistent short chorus theme that leaves space for solo statements within a one- to two-bar time loop in a 12/8 or 4/4 metric framework. Participants in the play-shopping group take turns, without interrupting the musical flow, to create a theme and continually vary it internally within the solo space. New themes could also be attempted within the time frame of a soloist's creations. The game stimulates creative spontaneity in life through the use of the musical paradigm. Again, an individual who has a secure sense of pulse and cycle could play the game alone.

Twosome dialoguing

Any two players of comparable competence on the drum can engage in twosome playing. They should inter-stimulate each other by conducting the dialogue in different formats, creating individual themes that they develop alternately. Partners could take turns, with one person maintaining the own segment or theme as a recurring, unvaried background or chorus while the other engages in free improvisations with an own theme. The improvisation approach could be internal or external and could introduce new themes. Extended external improvisations must resolve properly into the enabling theme and relationship with the partner. This exercise could also entail one partner merely keeping a steady pulse theme over which the other partner improvises, instead of an answering theme. A dialogue could also entail leading each other in playing varied thematic creations or variations that are reproduced exactly by the partner. The two must mark a steady common pulse with the feet. Twosome dialoguing could be featured within group play-shopping. The various types of twosome exchange are spiritualizing experiences that enhance fellowship.

Objectives of modern classical drum music

The oral/written drum music interface

Oral and written compositions share the same philosophical and theoretical principles in the configuration of thematic categories. The practice of a performer physically marking the pulse is advocated for both oral and written playing. The difference is that, in the written genre, solo drumming requires the performer to produce some of the written notes with the feet. For that purpose, stringed shakers for producing essential shaker notes/figures of the score with the feet are tied to the ankles. Drum solos feature in written and oral drumming. Ensemble playing could involve any manageable number of performers playing the same drum species, or combining a drum species with other indigenous instruments such as the wooden slit drum, the bell, the shakers, etc. Ensemble playing could also include European classical instruments and musical instruments, indeed of any other, world cultures. The typical African drum is an harmonically versatile instrument because it generates raw or cluster harmonics. The scientific and technological rationalization of the African drum, being derived from humanistic principles requires that it sounds in a neutral key. As such, tone levels that are generated on the drum are consistently in tune and harmony with any key or key changes (modulations or off-pitch adjustments) that may occur in the singing voice or melodic instrument of any culture, including the European classical melody instruments. On the other hand, indigenous aesthetics warrants that a drum or drums have to be tuned to produce the desired psychical ambience that will suit the mood of the music it plays. This principle of mood tuning does not contradict the fact of being in tune with any pitched instruments playing in the key and key changes written or preferred for a duo or an ensemble piece. If more than one pitched instrument is used in an ensemble with the drum, such melody instruments must be tuned normally to the appropriate key of the piece, oral or written.

Oral solo drumming

Basic performance and creative skill is required for oral solo drumming. The pulse sense must be secure and should be physically marked with one foot or alternating feet. Three objectives of oral solo drumming within the ambits of psychical self-therapy follow:

Anxiety management

Spontaneous solo drumming is therapeutic in such psychically unsettling situations as a traffic hold-up or other human situations that generate psychical tension or anxiety. Problems are more likely to be exacerbated than solved by anxiety. Knowledge of deep and high tone levels, as well as the slap, could be actuated to simulate drumming on the dashboard, a book/table top or any other hard object. This becomes more composing drumming when the melorhythmic patterns being played are simultaneously sung silently or mentally, using drum mnemonics. The adequate procedure for dispelling tension and anxiety is to compose and internally vary a nuclear theme of not more than two bars in 12/8 or 4/4 time. In African developmental theory, any theme of such duration could be recomposed (a developmental philosophy of internal regeneration of theme and self) an unlimited number of times without compromising the significant melorhythmic sound. A variation would entail the manipulation

of the tone levels along with the breaking up (fission) and reconstituting (accretion) of the rhythm durations of the basic theme[6]. The mind is looped into the thematic gestalt and every internal reordering of the sonic components of the theme, no matter how minute, is a creative achievement that obviates bother, distressing thoughts and generates elation.

Sleep therapy (self tranquilizing) and musical anaesthesia

The tone quality of a drum, combined with the humanistic science of thematic structures, can be self-applied to induce sleep. A drum with vibrant tone quality is needed, and must be played softly in a slow tempo. The ideal thematic structure should be simple, not rhythmically dense, and not more than one bar long in 12/8 or 4/4 time signature. Sleep therapy is best self-administered next to the bed. The structure of the theme and the tempo must not be varied. The short, open textured theme traps the mind in a recurring sonic loop that blocks off the intrusion of extraneous mental activity, and soon lulls the person to sleep. This simple science of inducing calmness and sleep by repeating a simple theme marks lullabies in African indigenous baby-soothing practice. In Africa, indigenous curative science greatly relies on musical anaesthesia, which is administered by a non-patient. It is encountered in some indigenous orthopaedic practices as an aid to bone-mending surgery, and also in the indigenous management or containment of insanity, whether innate or acquired. These are cases in which repetition of uniquely constructed structures is a conceptual forte in African musical arts science. The general principle remains to trap the mind in a revolving musical loop, and thereby sedate or banish the patient's psychical presence as well as psychophysical sensations for as long as the sonic loop is circling.

Euphoric solo drumming

The African drum is a most reliable companion, a soothing partner that responds to the player's moods and demands exactly as commanded. It is ideal for celebrating high spirits. The thematic category suited to euphoric playing should be spirited and preferably structurally dense. Euphoric drumming welcomes creative exuberance as imaginative internal and external development. Such drumming could induce a state of timelessness, and causes a cathartic feeling in the body and soul at the end of a euphoric trip. It is also ideal for the release of tension – the degree of creative imagination needed for spontaneous creative elaboration of a theme banishes extraneous mental engagement. The environment and the mood of the person would recommend the loudness or softness of play.

[6] See page 102 of Nzewi, M. (1991). *Musical practice and creativity: an African traditional perspective*. Bayreuth: Iwalewa-haus, University of Bayreuth.

Ensemble drum music

Anybody who wishes to participate in a drum music ensemble could easily perform capably in a group without any need for prior skills training. African drum music is the friendliest ensemble in which to experience the extra-musical benefits and joy of performance. The learning procedure that we advocate relies on the indigenous African performance principle that welcomes the joint participation of beginners, amateurs and "experts" in the same play-shopping/performance session. An uninhibited beginner is capable of playing danceable music within minutes of a first ensemble experience. Drumming a steady pulse already is a complete musical structure for choreographing a dance sketch. Participants must, however, note that development of creative proficiency in African drum music never ends. Every performance situation is a fresh challenge to creative genius. Ensemble drum music experiencing that involves two or more participants could be designed to effectuate the following contemporary objectives:

Classroom education in the African musical arts

Classroom education in African musical arts at any level is an important contemporary objective for modern classical drumming. The single membrane drum that can be tonally manipulated is versatile and ideal for classroom explications of the theoretical, philosophical, psychological, and performance practices of indigenous musical arts. Verbal theoretical or philosophical explanations as much as possible should take place in the context of practical experiencing by the learners. Practical classroom objectives should simultaneously produce literate and oral classical performers. Such practitioners could specialize as solo modern classical concert artists. The average performer should be skilled to play oral or written duos, and play in any orchestral music written for the African drum and any combination of instruments – indigenous and inter-cultural. Ideally, oral ensemble activities that must include practical dance and music symbiosis should precede every session of practical activities in written music. The oral play should aim at accomplishing other extra-musical, humanistic objectives – stimulating creativity, other-consciousness and the management of psychological indisposition such as self-inhibition, self-centredness, extroversion and other socially problematic character traits. These are crucial objectives in both classroom music education and rehearsal sessions that mandate strategizing oral ensemble play-shopping that deploys appropriate structural categories and interactive group-drumming games.

It is not very necessary to emphasize the playing of written scores at lower educational levels, although enterprising educators and learners are urged to start to incorporate the written approach early. We have already stated that a person who is competent in the written classical drumming genre, which gives guidance in generic African drum music practice, is capable of playing any drum music style from any African culture. Learners should work primarily with the tonally sensitive, open-ended single membrane drum and the slit drum. Both cover the technical demands of most other types of drum in Africa. However, in the absence of such standard indigenous instruments, schools should emphasize performing with locally available musical instruments and dances. Clapping and feet drumming are welcome alternatives where no instruments are readily available in a school environment. Attention must then be paid to simulating the structural imperatives of the idiomatic categories already discussed.

Education in the theory and philosophy of indigenous musical arts should constitute every class into a performing group or community. Additionally, school concert groups that could give public performances should be established, and must aim at being paid some performance fee by local patrons. The funds generated should be used to procure instruments as well as culturally sensible costumes more suitable for public performances, whether indigenous or modern classical. Schools should also attempt to perform contemporary popular music types using mainly indigenous musical instruments.

The idiomatic configurations discussed so far are to be used in both classroom education and applied play-shopping. They equally inform the philosophical-theoretical rationalization of the written compositions in this volume of *Contemporary study of musical arts,* from the solo to the ensemble categories. The design and procedure for classroom musical arts education that is based on the theory and practice of African classical drum music should strategize the following creative elements and performance principles:

- Practical sensitization with regard to the basic structural elements as well as body feeling of African musical sound such as pulse, tone levels, sense of phrasing, metric interface, various thematic categories, and the techniques of thematic variation.
- Distinction between the various ensemble parts and roles of instruments, as well as the knowledge of how and why the differentiated themes are combined in ensemble creativity.
- The potential of ensemble structures and interaction for instilling other-consciousness and group cohesion.
- Exercises in the spontaneous creation of themes (compositional procedure), development of themes and improvisation.
- Ensemble texture: part relationship as a matching of compatible themes instead of chord-based, note-by-note harmonization of themes.
- Self- and group expressions in dance, mime and movement.
- Principles of inter-cultural ensemble composition and performance.
- Training should combine rote playing with the written approach as already advocated, as needed for persons interested in modern classical concert playing. It is advocated that written scores should as much as possible make provision for performance composition passages where soloists could exercise creative genius through improvisation in rehearsals and concert performances.
- Ensemble practice sessions will aim at creating and producing standard ensemble pieces for a live audience, at least a school audience.
- The CIIMDA training course offers theoretical and practical expertise in African drumming and is designed to capacitate music educators to impart the ensemble performance values entrenched in African music principles to learners in schools.

Applied drum ensemble play-shopping

Team bonding play-shopping

We have designed a specialized content and procedure of play-shopping aimed at engineering team bonding among persons involved in various collaborative undertakings that require the synergy of diverse human individualities and relational tendencies. Such play-shopping activities are normally laced with the theoretical explication of procedure and sonic materials. This helps the mind to attune to the metaphysical sensations generated by musical arts structures intended to imbue bonding psychical dispositions. Practical musical arts experiencing

could be objectively conformed and applied as an effective-affective metaphysical tonic and communion according to the humanistic science of indigenous African knowledge systems. Modern drum ensemble play-shopping for team bonding is a socialization force that enhances fellow feeling and team spirit among categories of staff or collaborators in any corporate bodies or public institutions. It is also essential for members of common interest associations, including games and sports teams. "The [participant] experiences how musical arts making encodes social structures as well as directs the patterns of life – how music manages life. Social integration as well as the psychological stabilization of the individual as a component of a community is being achieved. "[7] Applied play-shopping should strategize special thematic structures as well as part relationships (ensemble roles) that have been identified as engendering fellow feeling and mutual support. The potency of communalistic action is conveyed by the indigenous African maxim, which instructs that: "when people combine to spear urine (contribute peculiar innate energies) at the same spot (to effectuating a unified enterprise/objective), great foam (quantum outcome) is accomplished" [indigenous truism].

Indigenous African musical arts making is ultimately a metaphysical experience. It commands interacting with potent intangible energies that galvanize spiritual regeneration through psychophysical activity. The benefit that accrues in an applied play-shopping activity would depend on the degree of open-mindedness a participant brings to the experience. The following general canons, in procedural order, that could ensure successful play-shopping for team bonding in particular, are recommended:

- The ground arrangement of a play-shopping activity must be circular. The circle is a metaphysical force. When a psychically engaging activity is organized in circular formation the ascribed personality or sense of importance of every participant is physically neutralized. Every participant's peculiar life force and animating (breath) chemistry is inevitably directed at the centre of the circle where it becomes subsumed into the collective life force, and becomes communally recharged for equal redistribution. All participants then inhale and feel the same metaphysical life essence of a bonded group. The circle or circular formation facilitates all round eye contact that heightens sense of common interest - the sharing of spiritual communion.
- Participants should stand behind their respective drums and start walking without moving forwards to a common regular tempo. This marking of the group pulse must be kept going right through the play-shopping exercises, whether sitting or standing.
- The facilitator divides the participants into two or more common-action groups, and introduces an interactive clapping game: determine a rhythmic statement, and then divide it into two or more segments. Get a group to start clapping the first segment, which then is a short rhythm figure that leaves empty space before it recurs in the circular time of the full theme. As soon as the first group is secure with repeating the clapped pattern, assign the segment that completes the rhythm statement to the second group, if two groups are preferred. If three groups are preferred, the pattern assigned to the second group will leave further space for the third group to complete the relay clapping exercise that makes the repeated rhythmic statement. The groups must be attentive while they clap their respective contributions to the complete rhythm circle as all will still be walking on the spot to the common pulse, irrespective of the structural peculiarities of the clapped segments. The facilitator could stop any group within the rhythmic circle, and assign it a new pattern that is structurally cognate with the on-going section/s. The activity stimulates consciousness of the varied contributions that result in a unitary product in the linear dimension. The facilitator could play games that would enable the participants to visually and sonically perceive how they inter-relate/inter-contribute different musical (human) energies that produce a finished product – the singular rhythmic statement. The facilitator could end this exercise while the participants continue walking the pulse, and introduce a different structural category: assign a complete short rhythm statement to be clapped repeatedly to one group. Give another group a compatible interactive rhythm statement of the same or a different length to also clap repeatedly. Some notes of the second or third independent rhythm statements should sound in the spaces occurring in between the clapped impulses of the first rhythm structure. The second pattern may also have notes that coincide in places with the clapped impulses of the first group's theme. This combination of simultaneously clapped statements produces an interlaced but unitary structure although the two or three groups are engaged in differentiated line/s of musical activity. A listener outside the venue would perceive the outcome as a unitary product involving all the participants in playing only the resultant statement as an undivided group. This is because the unitary outcome is perceived at the same level of tone and timbre – the collective flat clap.
- The group sits at the end of the warm-up clapping activity. If it is the first meeting of the participants, or if there are new members, the facilitator will take the group through the techniques for producing various levels and qualities of drum tones – deep tone, high tone, slap, open stroke, held stroke, etc. Exercises used to re-enforce skill in proper playing techniques as well as production of tone levels should entail short thematic phrases that combine the tone levels as they are introduced. The participants should play each thematic figure repeatedly while marking the common pulse with the feet. Each exercise should be played with increasing speed from slow to as fast as possible in order to develop technical skill in the flexibility of the wrist, adequate sitting posture, correct drum positioning, marking regular time, and alternate hand striking principles.
- At this stage, the group should be primed in spirit and technique for partaking in special team bonding performances and creativity. Play-shopping designed for team bonding should emphasize the following structural categories: Sharing of thematic statements; matching compatible themes in linear harmonious thinking; performing self within group solidarity (internal and external improvisation); sensitizing interpersonal listening, sense of thematic spans, and short sequences of twosome dialoguing by two participants, for other members of the group to appraise.
- Before the play-shopping activities end, celebrating with free group dancing will provide a further spiritually bonding experience. Some members of the group could take turns to create dance music that could feature other available instruments such as the pulse and the phrasing referent instruments, while the rest of the participants engage in somatic medley dancing.
- Effectively applied play-shopping activities that inculcate team spirit inevitably and subtly remedy personal psychological traits such as self-inhibition and an extroverted disposition. In any type of play-shopping we emphasize that, once the group support structure forms a steady background, what a soloist plays on top cannot be theoretically wrong because the solid, unvaried community response/support accommodates any slips. An inhibited personality then has little fear of expressing the self creatively or of playing something "wrong" in a supportive public forum. Confidence is gained during public expression of innate human quality after the fear is banished by the

[7] Nzewi, M. (2002). Modern music education and the African reality; grabbing the tail of a rainbow. In Magne Espeland (Ed.). *Samspel – ISME 2002 Focus area report.* Pp. 79-86.

pervasive feeling of comradeship. An extrovert is constrained to take limited solos and stay with others in exercises that coerce reiterated group motifs. Generally, every participant of whatever peculiar temperament is given group support to create themes for others to partake in, as well as to do solo improvisation with structured group support. A soloist theoretically does not play it "wrong" when there is a persistently urging textural foundation.

Anti-stress play-shopping

Anti-stress play-shopping is purposeful music therapy that enables participants to occasionally purge problematic psychical tension. It is also a performative site for discharging occasional personality disorientation/dissociation through the metaphysical interactions generated by structured drum music activities in a group. Play-shopping could be tailored variously to de-stress the staff of a stress/tension-prone workplace; to tackle personality rehabilitation needs; as general therapeutic interventions for socially dissociated persons; and also for managing depressive conditions. Three special categories of structural configurations that may be perfunctorily encountered in general music making and composition could be specially programmed for group therapy:

- Density of structure (rhythmically busy) in a group drumming activity displaces space, and thereby displaces self-absorption for a while, that is, sends the mind on a trip into supernormal consciousness.
- Openness of structure, on the other hand, coerces creative insertion of the self-image. It provides space for cathartic actualizing of self-worth through creative energizing (in sound or sensation) of the offered space, or otherwise negotiating self-worth in consciousness of the humanness of others.
- The third category is euphoric drumming in which an individual who is given steady pulsating structural support, a reiterated thematic block, feels liberated to celebrate life through unrestrained exploration of the own creative fantasy (extensive improvisation) that is rewarded with a feeling of psychical-emotional catharsis or purgation.

What causes tension or stress or psychotic indisposition is often a disinclination to recognize and accommodate the different human sensitivity, merits and foibles of others, or insecurity or disillusionment with one's innate self-worth or, otherwise, the tendency to rationalize the experiences of life with closed and suppressed or unshared emotions. A positive experience of anti-stress play-shopping can endure for a while. Hence a person prone to stress or depression or intolerance is urged to own a drum, and occasionally undergo self-purgation of deleterious attitudinal dispositions by engaging in self de-stressing solo play when group play-shopping is not available. Such self-administered anti-stress therapy could use the idioms of contemplative drumming.

We have applied anti-stress drumming therapy in practical projects to effect personality transformation of socially dissociated and disoriented young persons who then started demonstrating positive human merits and other-conscious social instincts as well as creative self-expression. [8]

The general canons and procedural order itemized for conducting team-bonding play-shopping are recommended for group anti-stress therapy meetings. The idiomatic categories to be emphasized as soon as appreciable creative and technical skills are acquired include: creative spontaneity in chorus-solo framework; group euphoric drumming; performing attentive listening; performing self within community solidarity; anxiety management creativity; and sleep therapy.

General

Efforts to design a literacy continuum for African indigenous knowledge systems including the mental arts should emphasize the principle of advancement. This implies systematic creative rationalization aimed at updating indigenous philosophical imperatives, theoretical principles and humane practices in terms of innate artistic sense and creative intentions of any given period of human civilization. Meaningful advancement should thus reflect the contemporary local as well as global imperatives in the context of inherited indigenous lore. In the musical arts, an advancement mentality must discern, prioritize and propel the humanizing orientation and societal virtues that mark Africa's original creative aspirations. This implies eschewing exogenous theories, technologies and practices that compromise, subsume, supplant or arrogantly abuse the noble merit and objectives of Africa's indigenous philosophies, principles and practices. It includes cognitively designing a literacy continuum of **cultural authority** – adapting the exogenous but compatible idioms and materials into the mould or theoretical framework of heritage; as opposed to **tokenism/fancifulness** – the frivolous insertion of abstracted elements of heritage into adopted but incompatible exogenous intellectual models or theoretical-philosophical moulds.

Leadership

Most indigenous African societies formally honour and celebrate outstanding human achievements and achievers. However, in the indigenous social, political, religious, economic and musical arts systems, leadership is not conceptualized or practiced in terms of the superstar serviced or worshipped by subordinates. Leadership is recognized and practiced in original African cultural systems as the captain of significant partners or team-mates. Leaders of contemporary choral or instrumental African music ensembles adopt the role and antics of a commanding conductor in a European classical orchestra or choir. This supreme commander structure in performance situations is absurd by African indigenous leadership principles, and sometimes outrightly ridiculous, especially in choral performances that reflect an African cultural orientation. After all, in any well-practised performing group, every member of an ensemble already knows her/his part well and also knows how or when it fits into the whole group performance structure. There may be some need to update the role and normative performance behaviour of the African mother musicians (contextual manager/ensemble coordinator) as contemporary presentational imperatives may recommend, without bastardizing African leadership philosophy and practice. A case could, perhaps, be made for large and complex orchestral groups such as a symphonic orchestra performing essentially African literacy compositions. In such an instance an authoritatively African construct adopts a European typological mould, and could, therefore, require the convenient presentational management.

[8] See Smith, K. (2003): The Soccajasco kids project: an African musical intervention in an African problem. In Anri Herbst (ed.), *Emerging solutions for musical arts education in Africa.* Cape Town: African minds, Pp. 306-320. Also Nzewi, M. (2002). Modern music education and the African reality; grabbing the tail of a rainbow. In Magne Espeland (ed.), *Focus area report, 25th Biennial World Conference and Musical Festival, International Society for Music Education (ISME)* Bergen: ISME, Pp 79-86.

Structural content

The trend in contemporary Africa to re-conceptualize vocal music to suit the theoretical and stylistic models of European classical music has persisted. Thus we find authoritatively African themes and, sometimes, creative idioms being contrived in the SATB theory. Considering the prodigious theoretical configurations that mark Africa's creative manifestations and human practices, it is absurd to witness contemporary Africans unreservedly re-culturing themselves to become wholesale mental and consumer mutants of European and American modernism. Humanly prestigious African participation in any aspect of globalization should aim to project authoritatively advanced African human merit and intellectual mettle into the global mainstream – constructing and managing African uniqueness within the communion of world practices. The prevalence of African puppets shamelessly parading and parroting the unique intellectual productions of other world cultures injures and perjures the profundity of indigenous knowledge inventions.

The contemporary predilection for recreating indigenous African creative-artistic models that aim to conform to the European-American classical creative theories, forms and presentational practices in the performance arts needs to be reformed. The imitated exogenous models are fanciful models of the humanizing and communality-building uniqueness of Africa's indigenous prototypes that are acutely needed in the contemporary promotion and inculcation of wholesome spirituality. The trend in vocal music education, for instance, subverts humanly unique African vocal music philosophy and aesthetics in composition as well as presentational aspirations and theatre. An intellectually and humanly prestigious endeavour must contemporaneously advance indigenous models and standards while skilfully integrating viable elements of the European classical tradition. The thematic development theories, harmonic systems, partner relationship formulae, vocal aesthetics and evocative presentational theatre peculiar to indigenous African choral and instrumental styles remain genuine, intellectual exemplars. The idea of discarding or subordinating their intellectual and utilitarian merit to exogenous fancies is self-debasing, and a betrayal of posterity.

Part of the advancement strategy is to recognize that European classical musical instruments are viable for representing and interpreting African indigenous theory and idioms with creative imagination and without loss of characterizing integrity. Performance technique on the instruments, however, may require slight reorientation.

Pitiably few practical initiatives involving concerned African intellectuals devoted to advancing Africa's intellectual genius in the creative and performance arts, exist. Contemporary pursuits that advance the indigenous standards of creativity and presentational theatre need to be systematic, basic to cognitive research orientation that would furnish modern theoretical, utilitarian and performance directions. But there are intuitive advancement aspirations outside academic institutions that are contemporaneous. Advancement initiatives, as any envisioned audience recommends, should cultivate an inter-cultural vision in instrumental selections and theoretical formulations, but should primarily demonstrate African creative theories and principles. It is imperative, in contemporary Africa, to expose cultural arts educators, bureaucrats and promoters to the benefits of strategic advancement initiatives taking place in Africa, especially outside conventional institutional complacencies. This is the mission of the Centre for Indigenous Instrumental Music and Dance Practices of Africa (CIIMDA), which targets the reorientation of education for the present and for posterity towards the advanced philosophy, theory and humanizing objectives of the indigenous musical arts.

The written classical concert genre

Performing written classical concert music entails ability to read and interpret a written score. We have designed notation symbols for representing the various tones used in classical African drumming. The symbols are combined with conventional durational symbols for musical rhythm in writing music for the drum and other indigenous ensemble instruments. Solo concert drumming implicates the imperatives of visual theatre and dance in African musical arts conceptualization. Thus the solo concert performer occasionally simulates dance, which is implicated in the idea of African drum music, when producing and interpreting the written body rhythm notes. These are the clap sound, the rattle sound produced when the performer activates the rattle tied to her/his ankle by stamping the feet, the finger-snapping sound, the chest-drumming (body rhythm) sound, and the cupped palm slapping sound that produces a plosive sound ambience different to the sound of a normal clap. The normal notes produced on the drum are combined with these extra sounds to simulate the integrated artistic components of African indigenous musical arts conceptualizations in our design of modern African classical solo drumming.

Drum notation

The tone symbols we have devised for composing written African single membrane drum music are as follows:

	A deep tone produced at the centre of the drumhead with cupped hands – bounce-off stroke
	A high tone at the rim of the drumhead with rigid tightly held fingers – bounce off stroke
s	A slap tone at the rim played as a sharp, held stroke
^	A tone produced on the body of the drum with a ring worn on a finger
>	A clap tone produced by clapping together flat palms
	Finger snapping with both hands
	A rattle tone produced by activating the rattles tied to the ankles when the feet are stamped
	A roll as appropriate: rim or centre of the drum head
	A chest tone produced by beating the chest with fists
	A crushed note
	Reverb on two tones
gliss	A glissando effect produced by playing rapidly repeated strokes while gliding a finger/ fingers or the base of the palm up and down over the drumhead

(Vocalized syllables are written in conventional music notation symbols.)

cupped hands for deep tone

playing the deep tone

fingers held together for high tone

playing the high tone

struck wooden shell

struck wooden shell

clap with cupped hands

normal clap

playing the cowbell

slap on drum

Classical drumming exercises

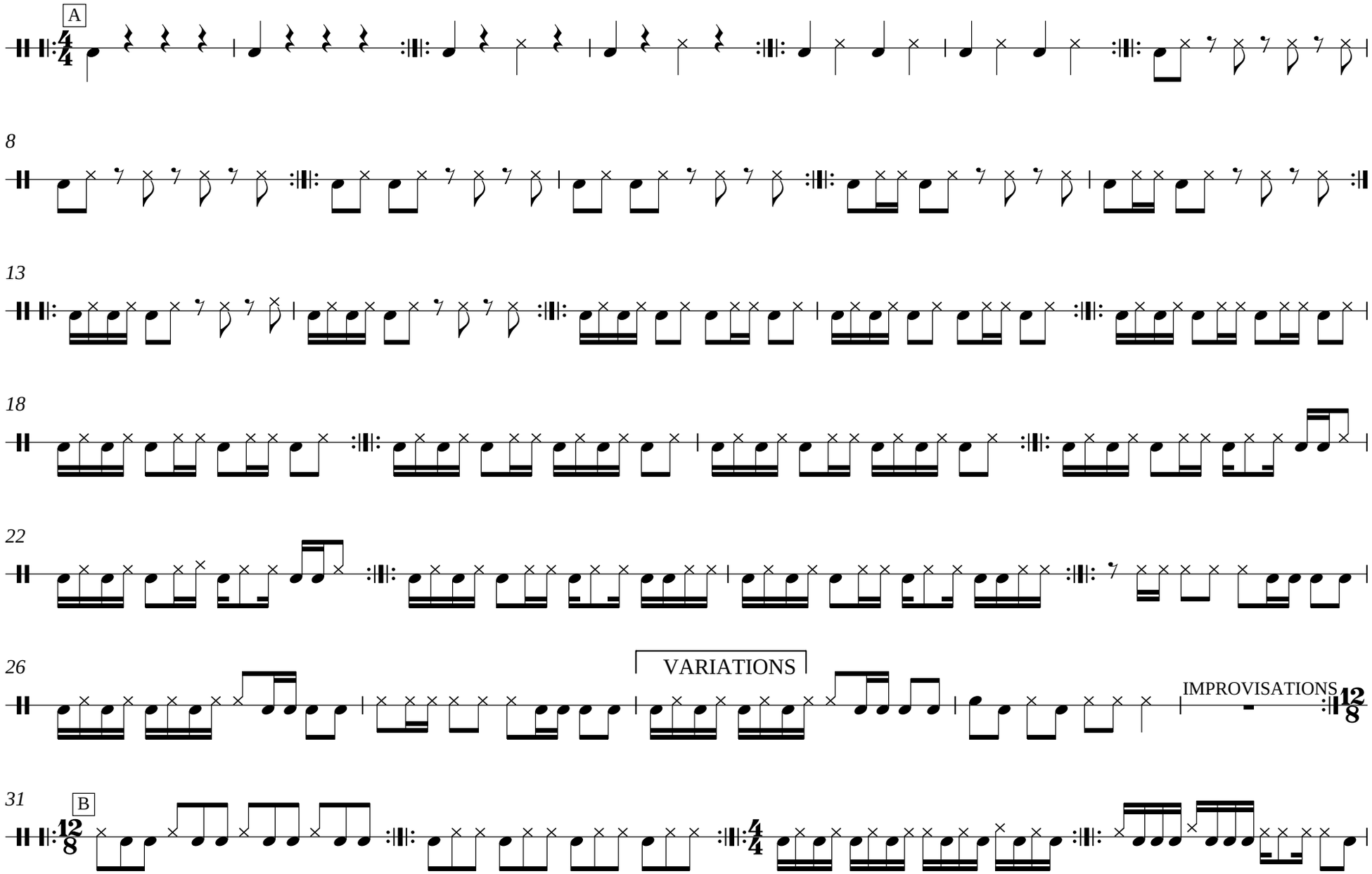
Technical exercises have been provided on the following pages for familiarization with classical drumming notes as well as the stimulation of improvisatory skill. They also serve as fairly progressive exercises for understanding rhythm and the two primary interfacing metric matrixes in African indigenous music, the common quadruple and the compound quadruple metres. Each exercise unit is blocked with double bar lines. Each unit should be accurately played independently and repeated as many times as necessary. Then the exercises should be played sequentially until it is possible to play them from beginning to end without stopping, repeating each unit before proceeding to the next. Where improvisation, internal variation style, is indicated, the number of variations to be played is unlimited, but at the discretion of the learner. As technical skill improves, the learner should increase speed, noting that consistency of speed is critical. The pulse should be measured with the foot/feet.

playing the shakers

playing the slit drum

snapping of fingers

DRUMMING EXERCISES



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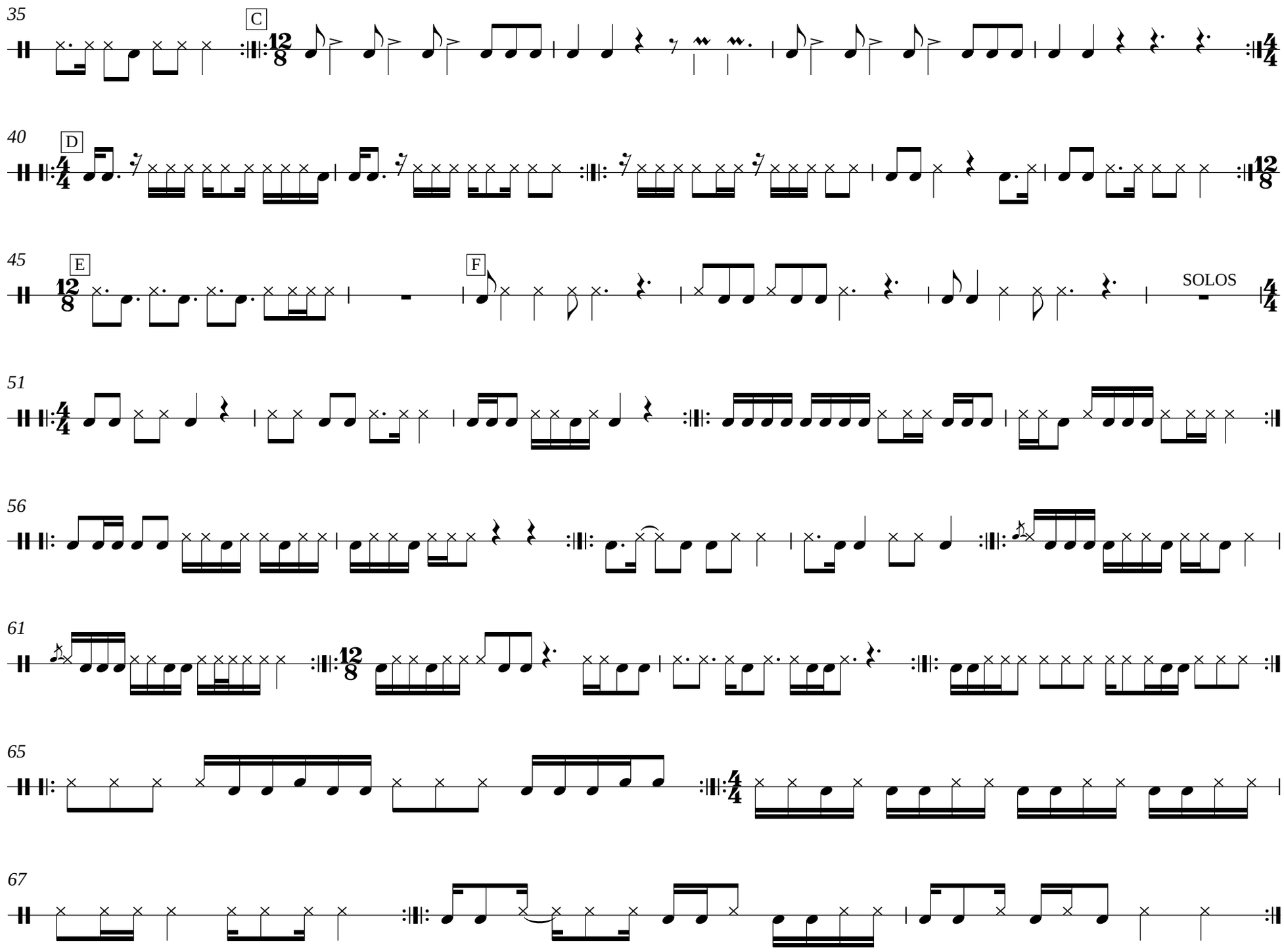


Concert drum solos and drummistic piano solos

Drum solos

In choosing a drum, a modern classical concert drummer should pay attention to the quality of timbre produced by a drum when struck by listening for the desirable fundamental interval between the deep and high tones, preferably the open fifth or fourth. Most contemporary drum builders in Africa produce haphazardly constructed instruments that may look polished and attractive due to commercial instead of musical reasons, especially for the curio or tourist market. The African instruments that are precision-made factory products now have refined features, but they are inferior in terms of sonic quality and curative energy to the indigenous, handmade prototypes fashioned by traditional crafts persons who rely on the indigenous science of material and sound. Curative potential does not necessarily mean curing the sick; it rather signifies more of a preventive measure, especially prevention of psychical disablement. Refinement or polish more often than not masks diminished virtue and health potency.

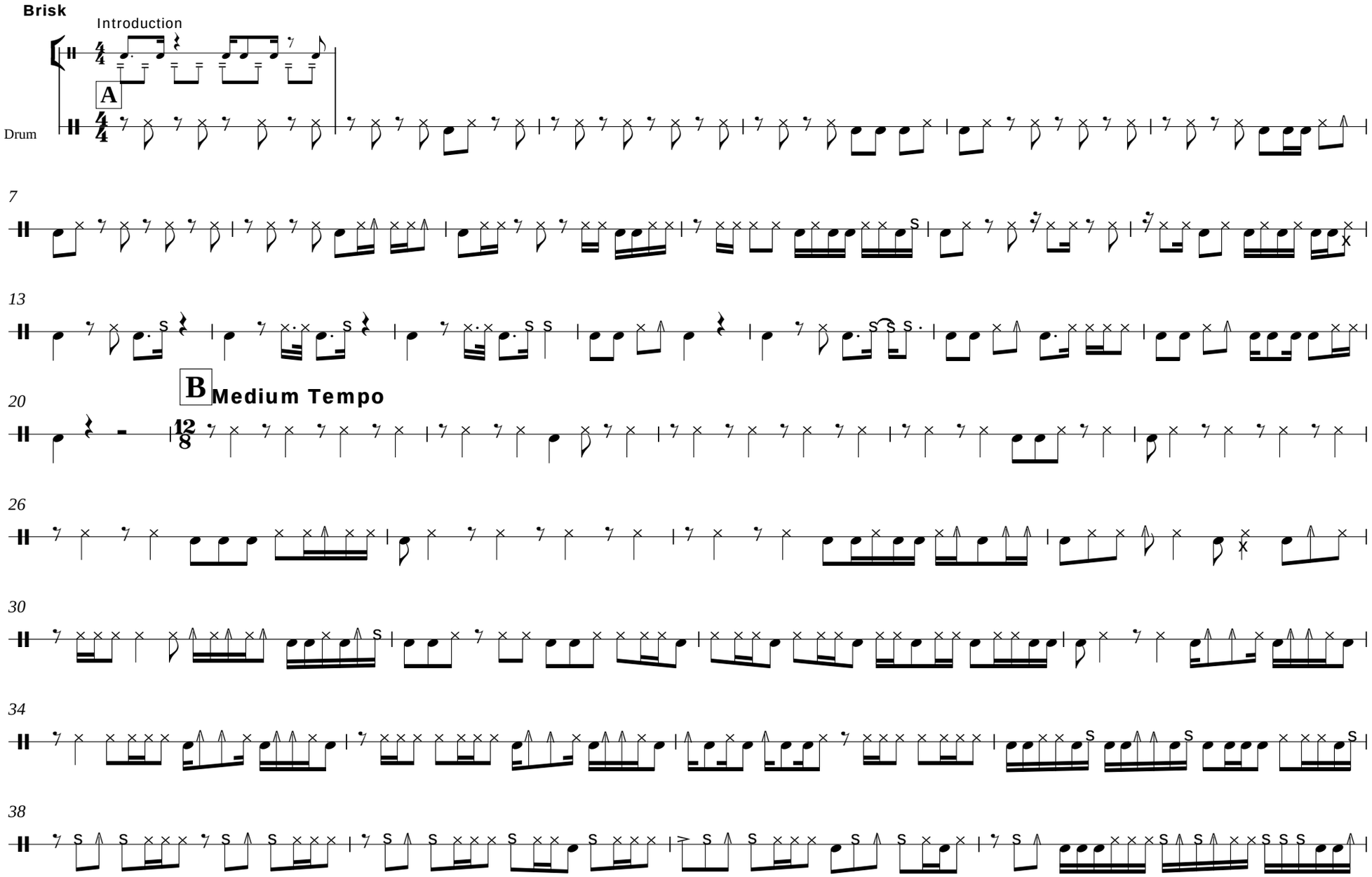
An expert drum builder pays attention to the indigenous technological and scientific procedures that ensure clear vibrant tones that are rich in cluster or raw harmonics. The subtle health essence of the typical African drum derives from the vibrant cluster harmonics that imperceptibly massage brain, nerve and other body tissues. Hence to play a properly made drum is to automatically regenerate one's overall psychical health. The science of thematic and developmental structures would then consolidate the human medicine intention of a particular performance. The fundamental health science rationalized into African indigenous music conceptualization also prescribed the preference for cast iron, which emits rich healing sonic energy in manufacturing bells and finger pianos. The same objective informs the preference for animal hair or strips of special animal skin for string instruments that, even as melody, instruments generate vibrant raw harmonics that also resonate with the echoing essence of body tissues. Most indigenous African musical instruments are researched, designed and fashioned to produce sonic energies that regenerate psychic and organ health, and thereby imbue spiritual wellness.

The species of open-ended single membrane drum ideal for playing concert drum solos should produce resonant and vibrant tones with distinct deep and high tones. The drumhead should have a wide circumference. The skin should be of the right kind of wild animal, and must be "live" – that is, procured immediately after the animal is killed, so that the blood has not drained off the skin completely. Blood patches must still be noticeable on the skin when the drum is held up to the light. A white, bloodless skin produces little health-imbuing sound and breaks more easily. The body of the drum should be of plain, resonant wood, without strings or cloth wrappings that will encumber resonant wood tone. Hence the *djembe* drum, although most ideal for ensemble drum music categories, is not ideal for a classical concert drum solo. Indigenous drum-building experts recommend an appropriate hard redwood, although a hard whitewood also produces a sound of good quality. The drum should ideally have tuning devices for lowering and raising the level of tonal ambience to suit the aesthetic taste of the performer, as well as the audience. A strip of cloth or rope should be used to secure the drum comfortably to the waist of the performer, so that it hangs and is independent of the legs, which will then be free to produce rattle notes when the feet are stamped.

The written compositions in this volume are open to flexible interpretation –for a performer to add input derived from her/his own musicality and aesthetic personality in the interpretation of scores. Our philosophy in written composition is that the performer should be a creative partner of the original composer as in indigenous African performance composition philosophy and theory. The drum compositions feature the barest phrasing, speed and dynamics annotation for performance interpretation, thereby making allowance for the performer's interpretative sensibility. A feeling for the emotional recommendations of a piece of music is the capacity of every normal person, and this cannot always be prescribed, just guided. We credit the drummer-interpreter with a sensitive creative personality and responsibility. Hence the compositions accord interpretative freedom that would challenge her/his innate musicality. Some of the compositions make provision for spontaneous improvisation on a given framework. This is the hallmark of an accomplished and rated indigenous African musician. The drummer-interpreter is dealing with a melorhythmic instrument and must, as much as possible, sing the score mentally while she/he learns it.

New Voice for Old Sound No. 2 *Hop Along* (Igba drum solo)

Meki Nzewi



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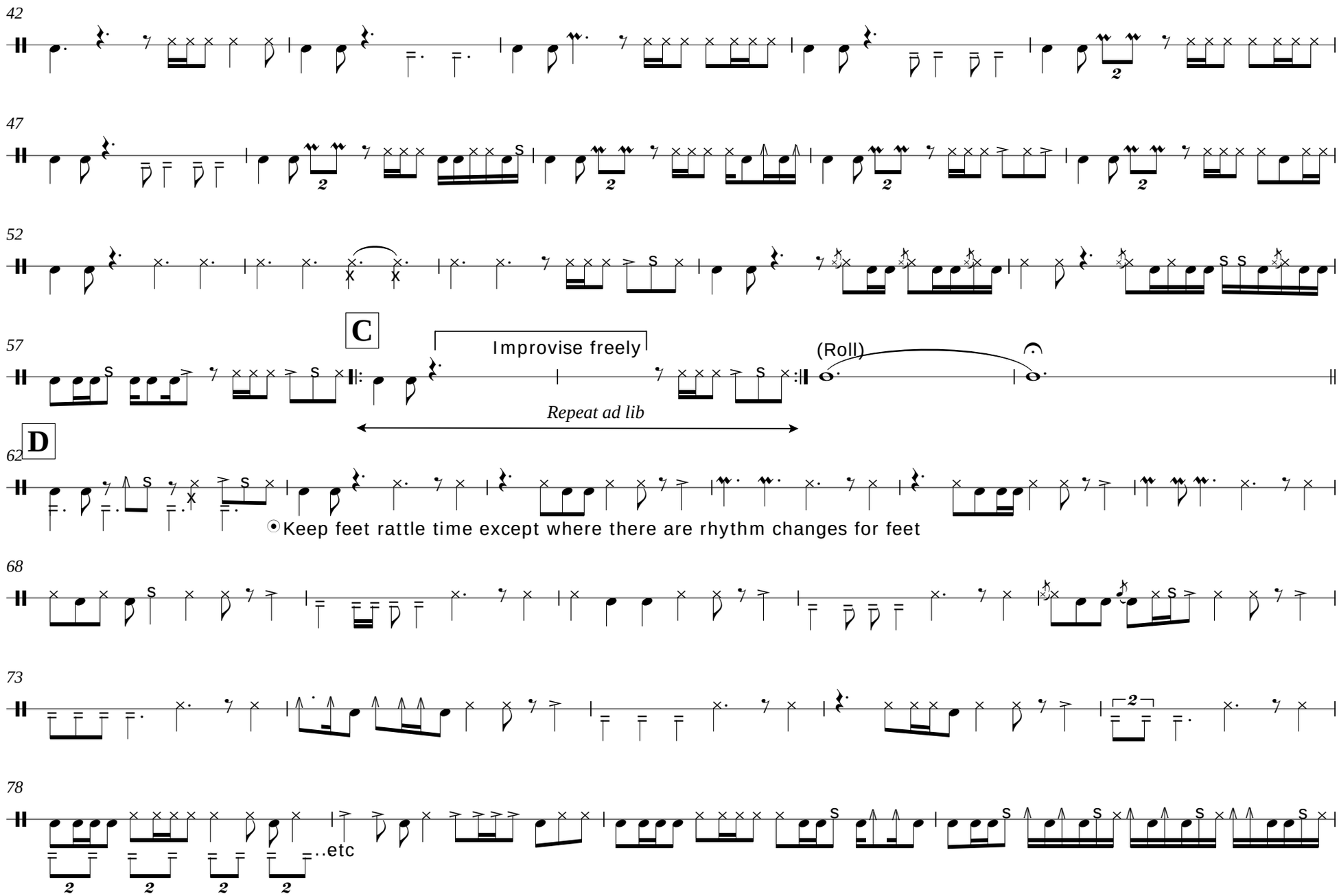
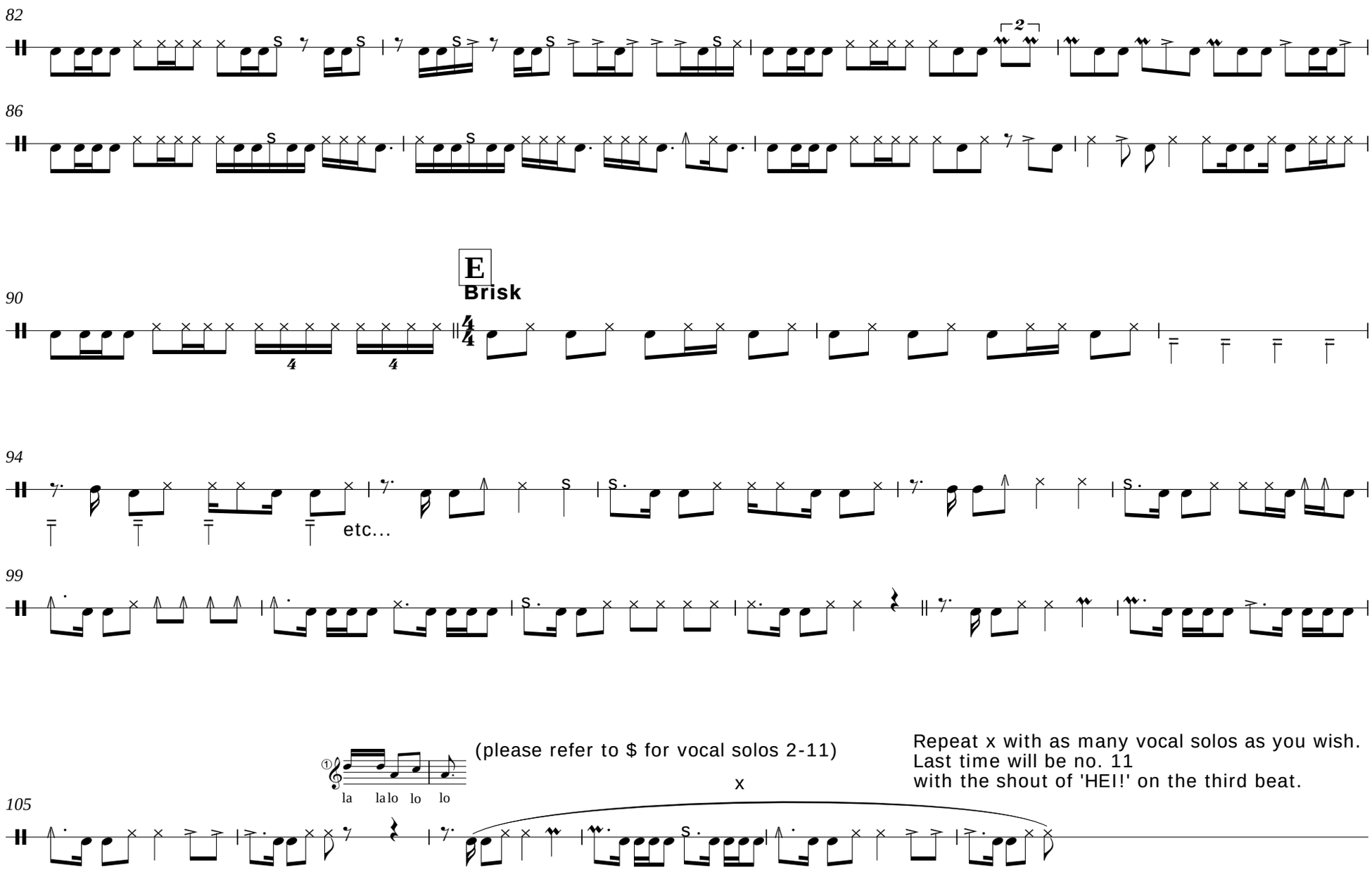
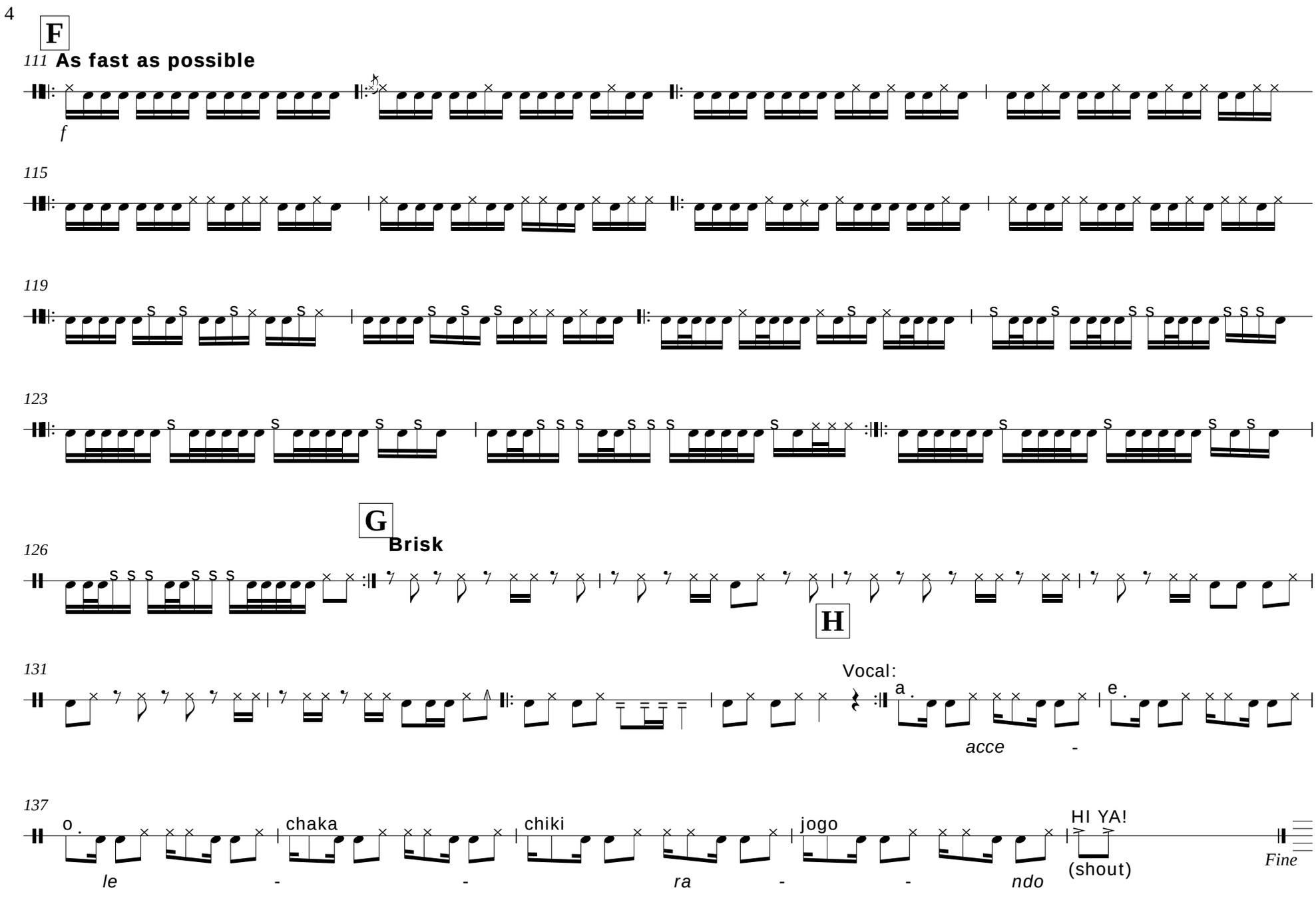

42
47
52
57
C
Improvise freely
(Roll)
Repeat ad lib
62
D
Keep feet rattle time except where there are rhythm changes for feet
68
73
78
..etc

3


82
86
90
E
Brisk
94
etc...
99
105
la la lo lo lo
(please refer to $ for vocal solos 2-11)
x
Repeat x with as many vocal solos as you wish.
Last time will be no. 11
with the shout of 'HEI!' on the third beat.


4
F
111 As fast as possible
f
115
119
123
G
Brisk
126
H
131
Vocal:
a
e
acce
-
137
o
chaka
chiki
jogo
HI YA!
(shout)
Fine
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ra
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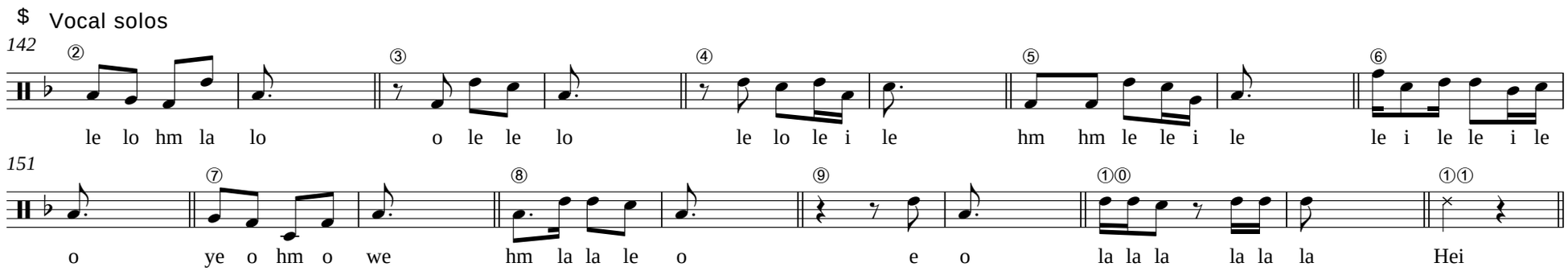
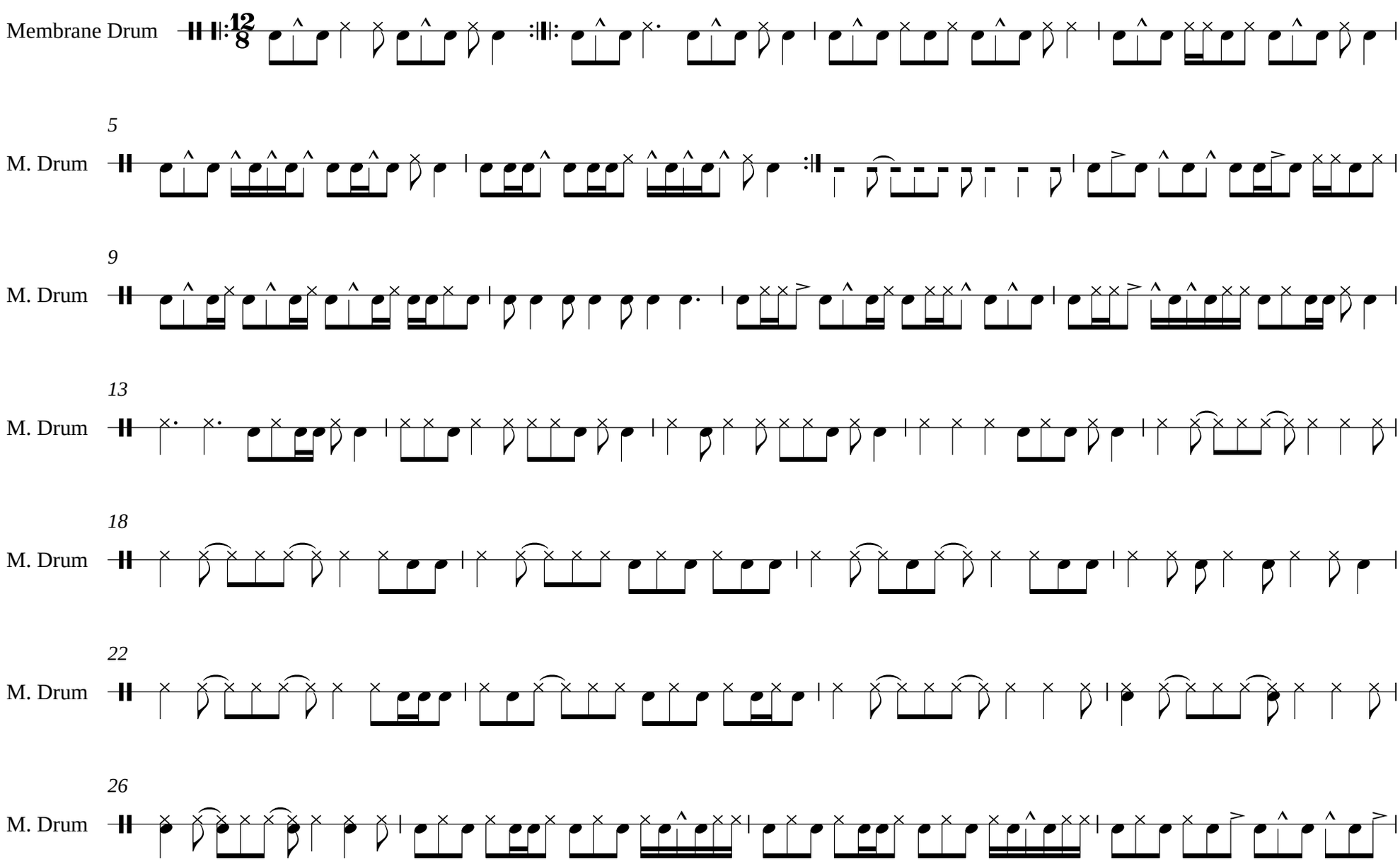
ndo

5


$ Vocal solos
142
②
③
④
⑤
⑥
le lo hm la lo
o le le lo
le lo le i le
hm hm le le i le
le i le le i le
151
⑦
⑧
⑨
①⓪
①①
o
ye o hm o we
hm la la le o
e o
la la la
la la la
Hei

Ngedegwum

Odyke Nzewi



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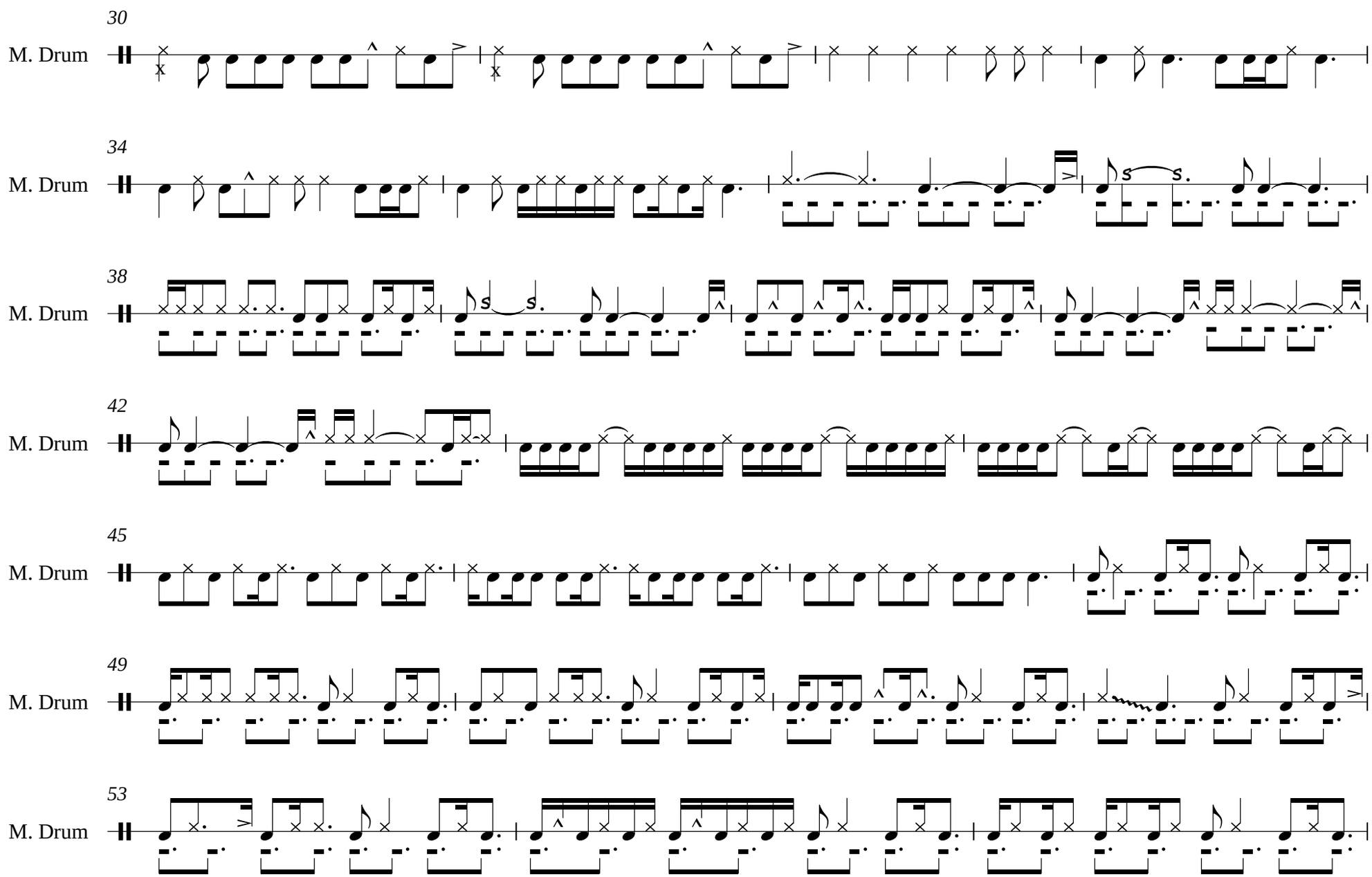
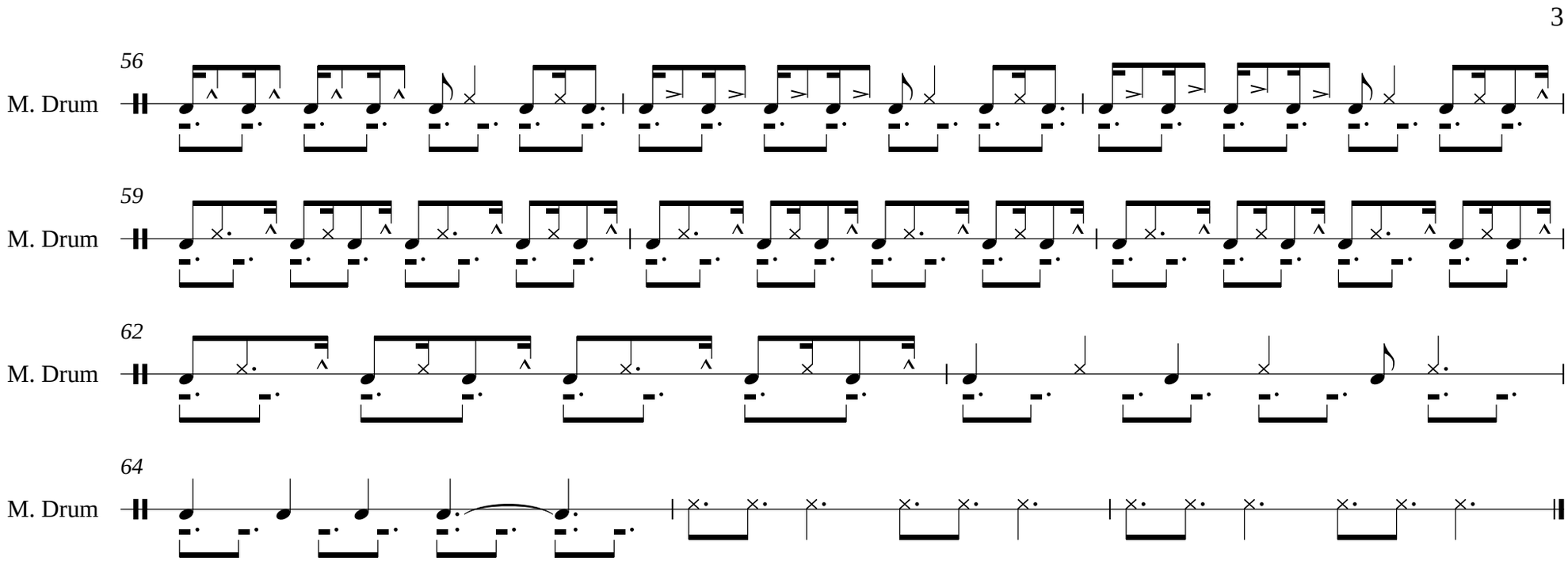
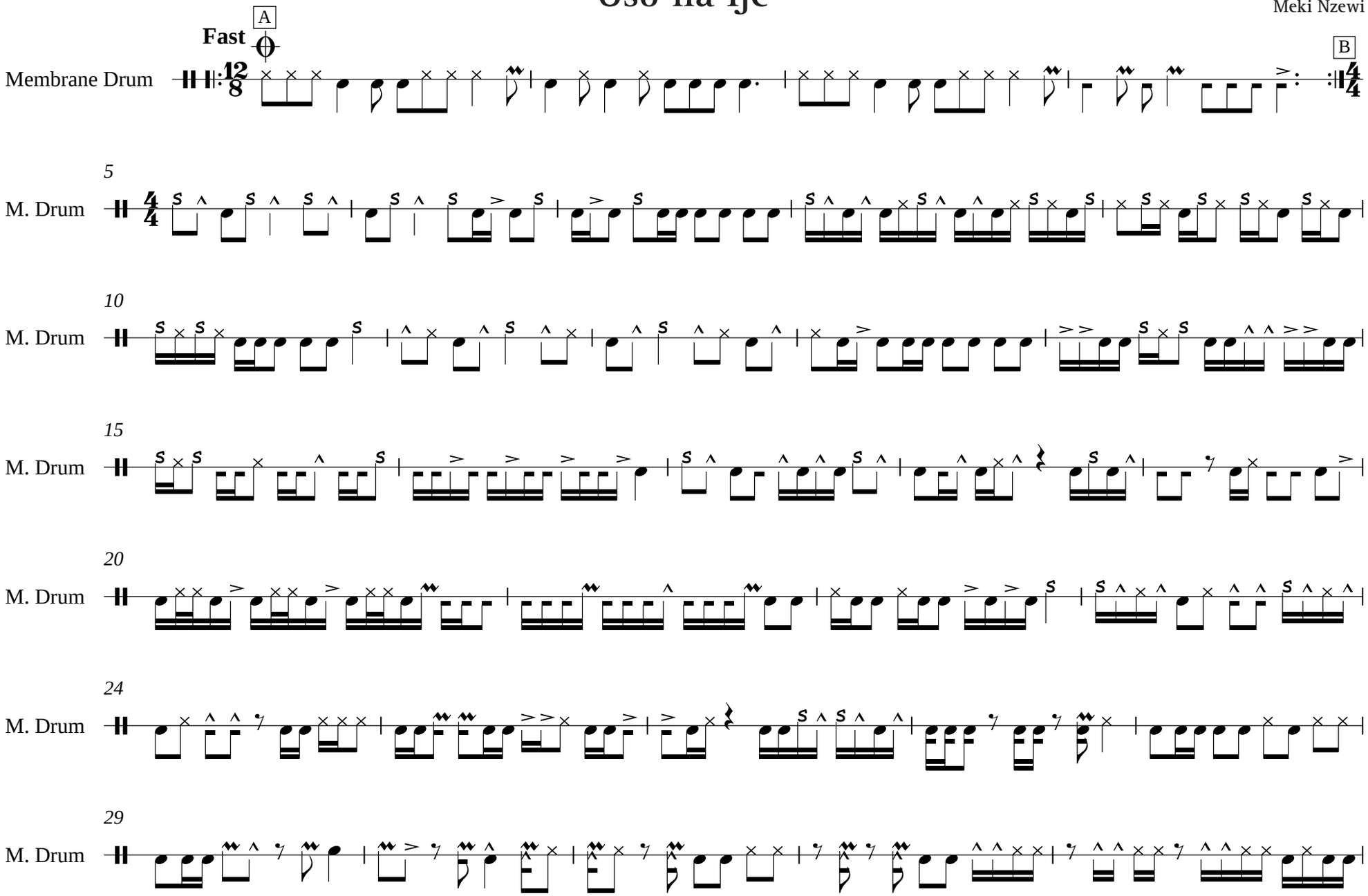




(Audience clap the last two bars for solo drumming)

Oso na Ije

Meki Nzewi



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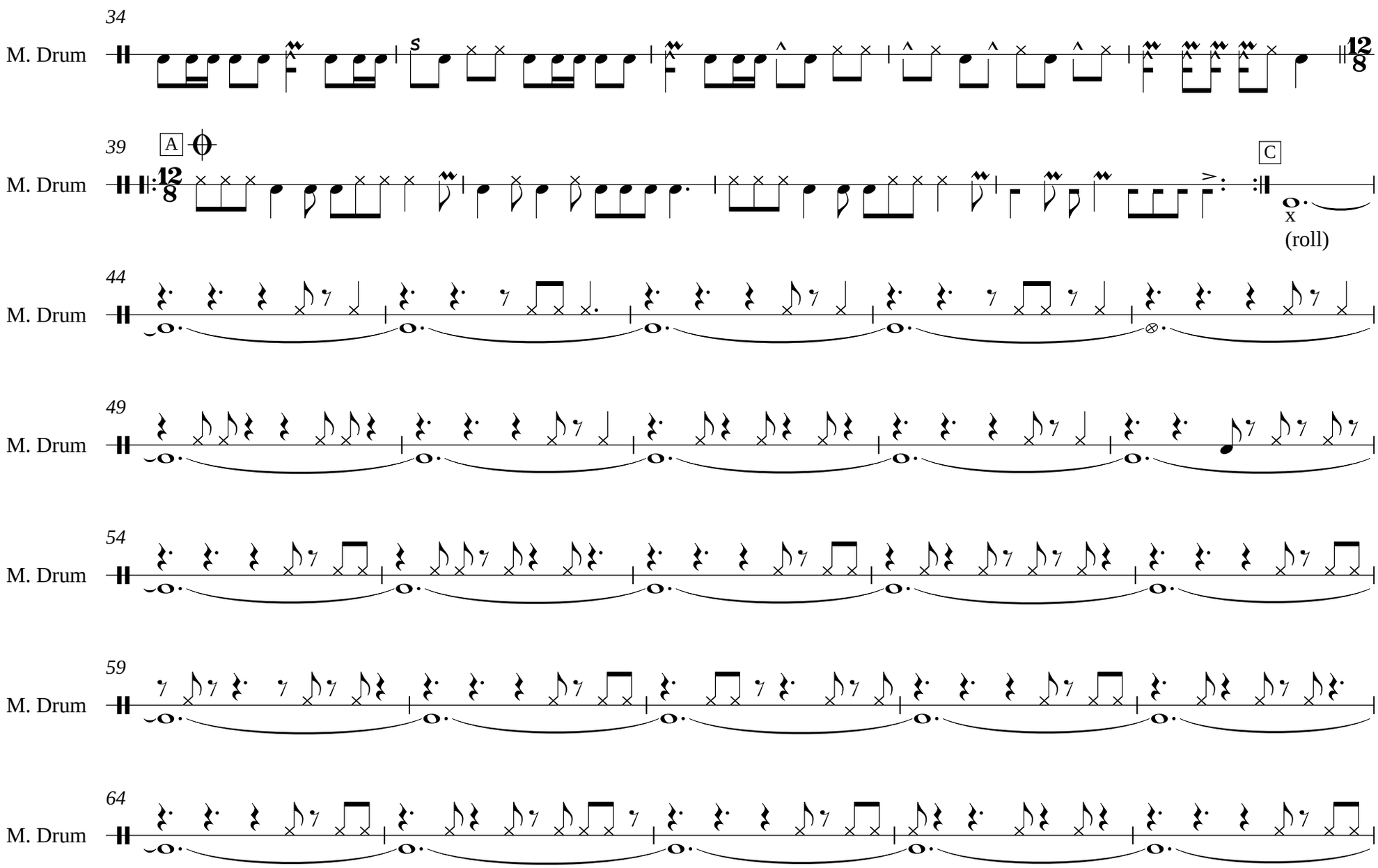
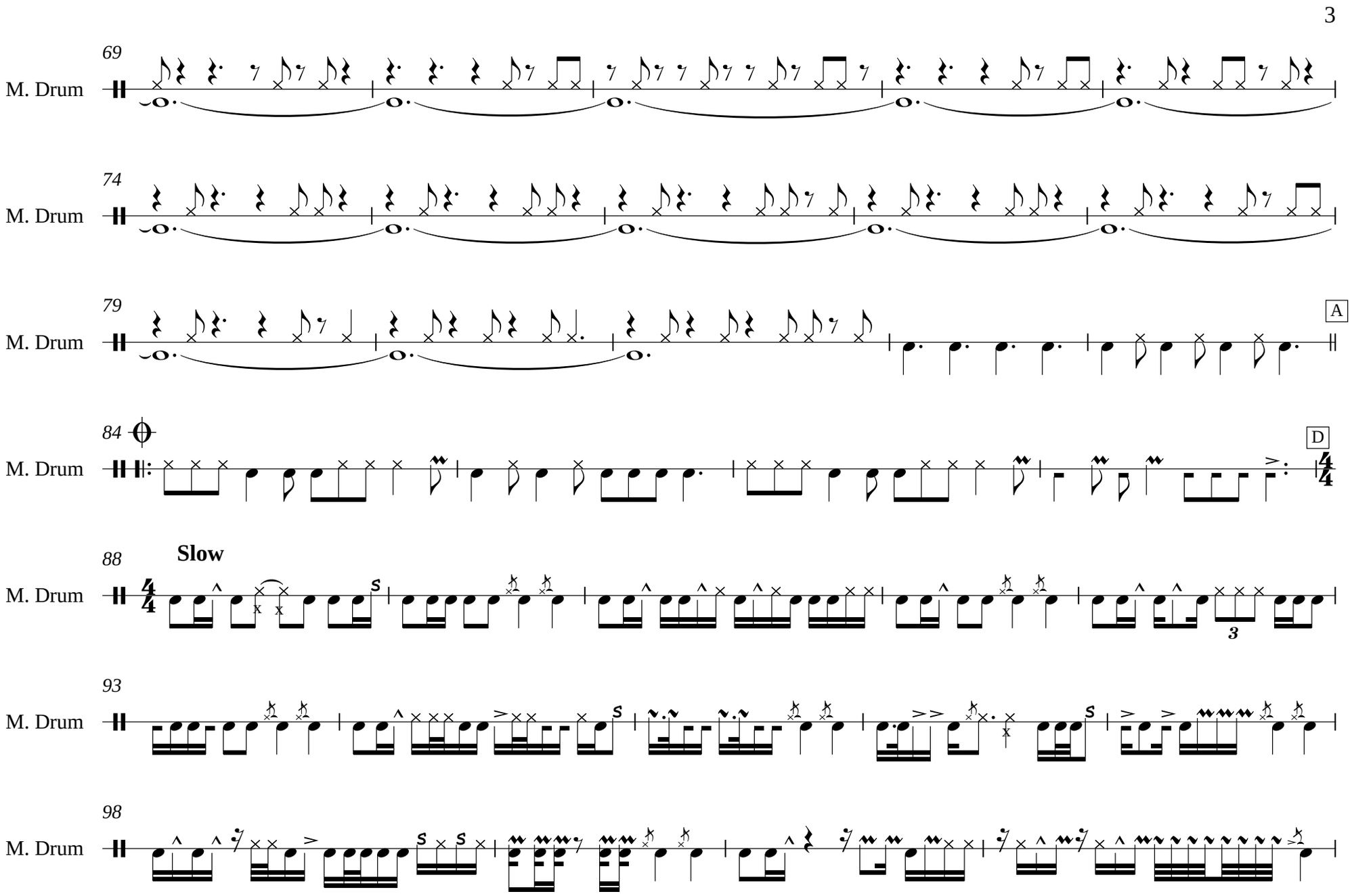
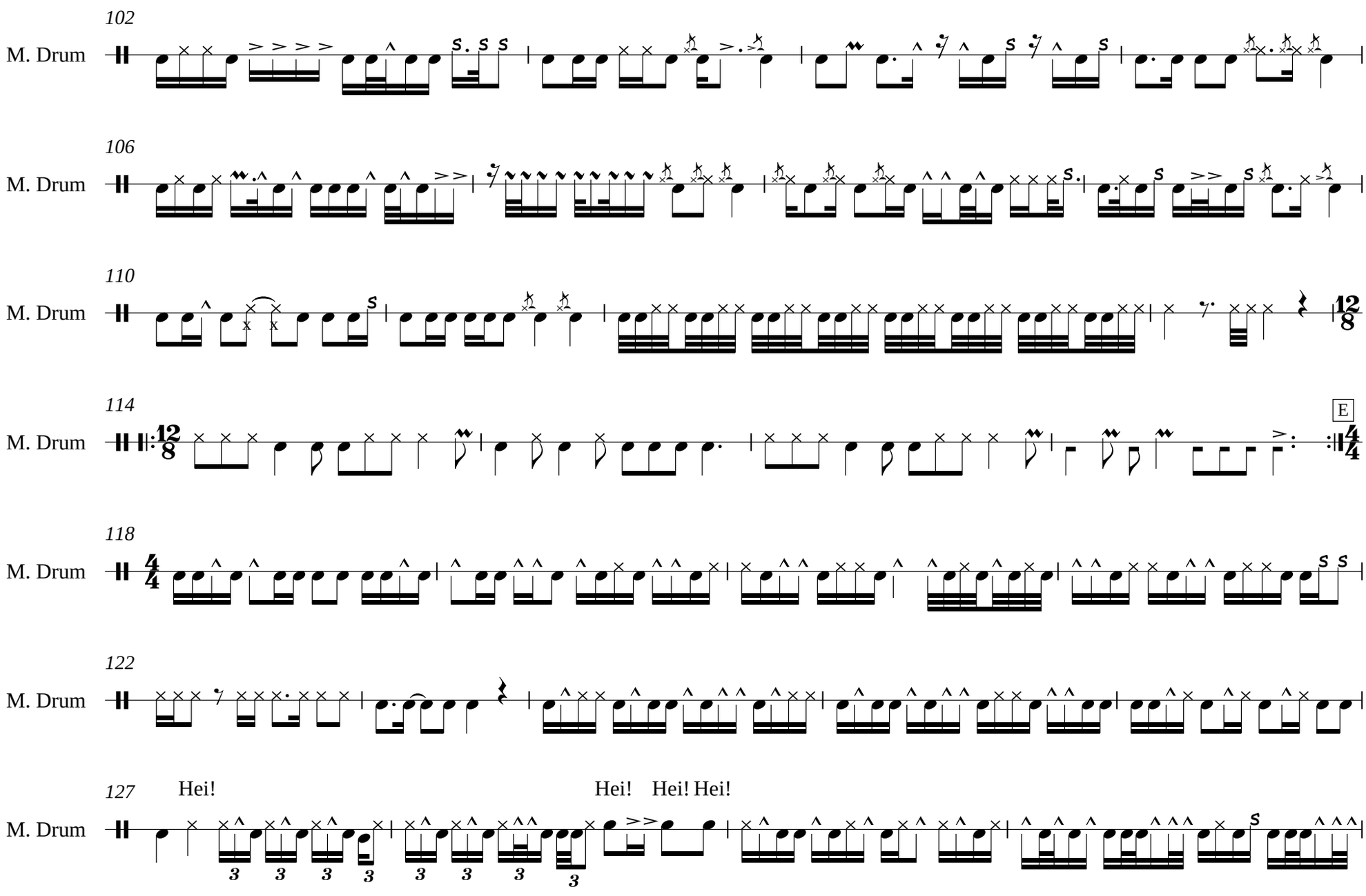
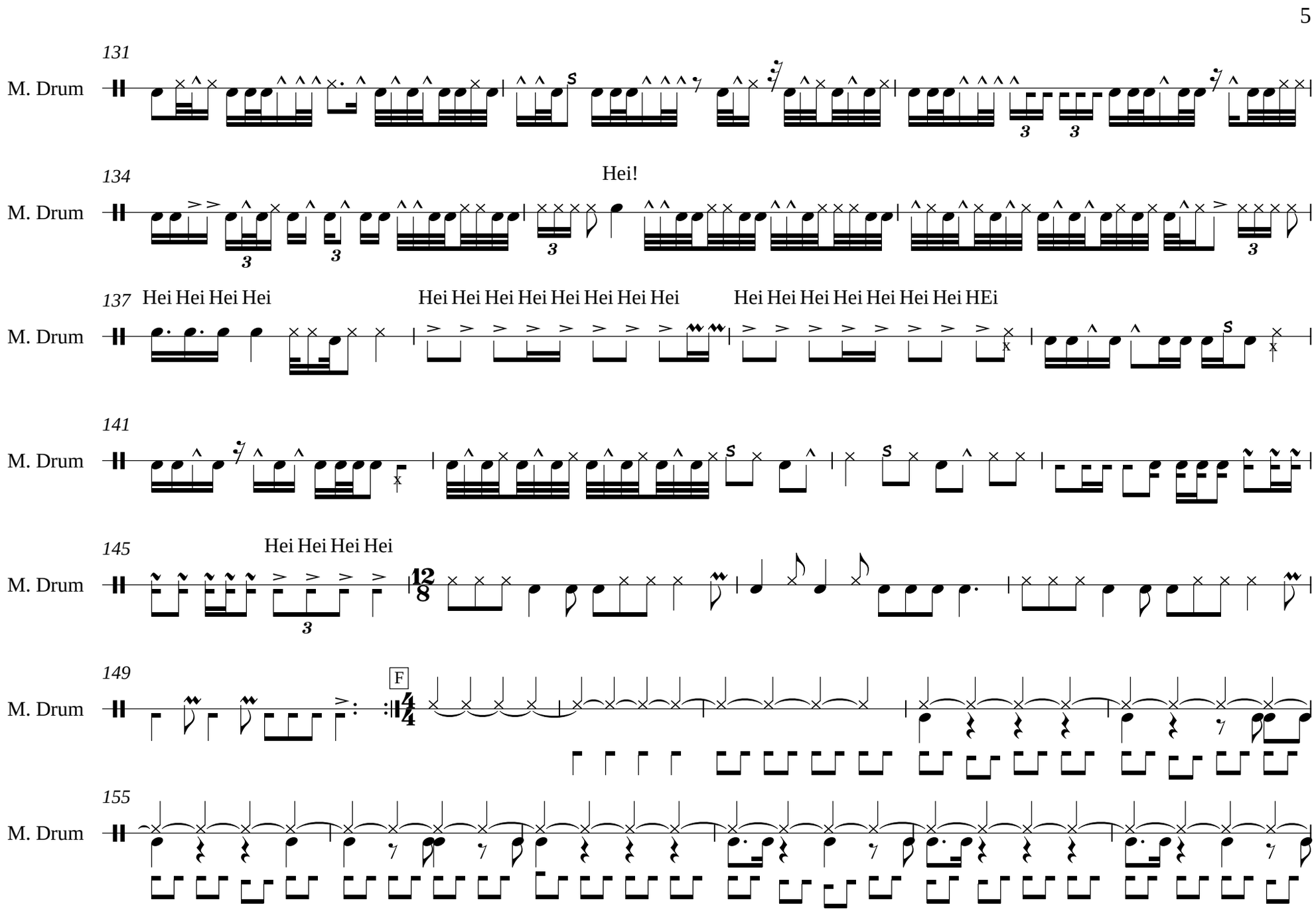

34
M. Drum
39
A
M. Drum
C
(roll)
44
M. Drum
49
M. Drum
54
M. Drum
59
M. Drum
64
M. Drum

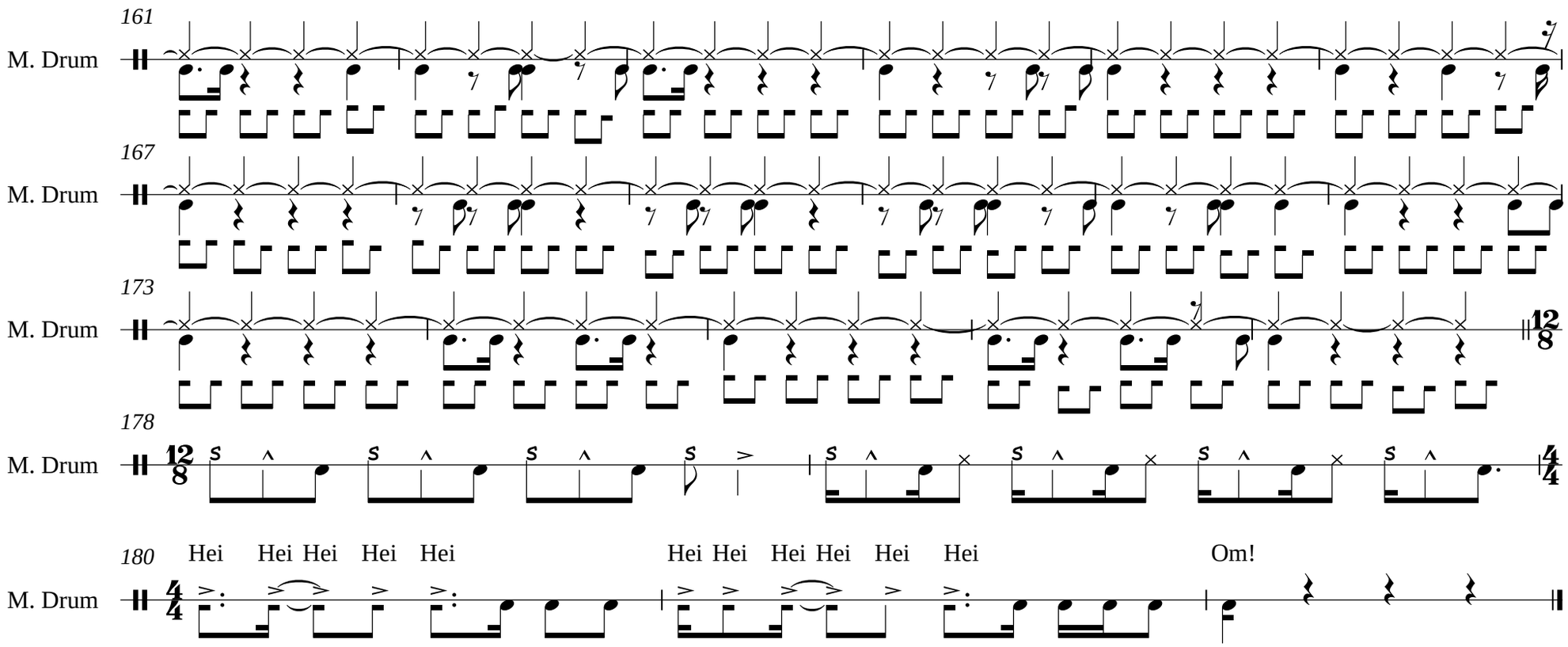

3
69
M. Drum
74
M. Drum
79
M. Drum
A
84
M. Drum
D
88
Slow
M. Drum
93
M. Drum
98
M. Drum

4


102
M. Drum
106
M. Drum
110
M. Drum
114
E
M. Drum
118
M. Drum
122
M. Drum
127
Hei!
Hei! Hei! Hei!
M. Drum


5
131
M. Drum
134
Hei!
M. Drum
137
Hei Hei Hei Hei
Hei Hei Hei Hei Hei Hei Hei Hei
Hei Hei Hei Hei Hei Hei Hei HEi
M. Drum
141
M. Drum
145
Hei Hei Hei Hei
M. Drum
149
F
M. Drum
155
M. Drum

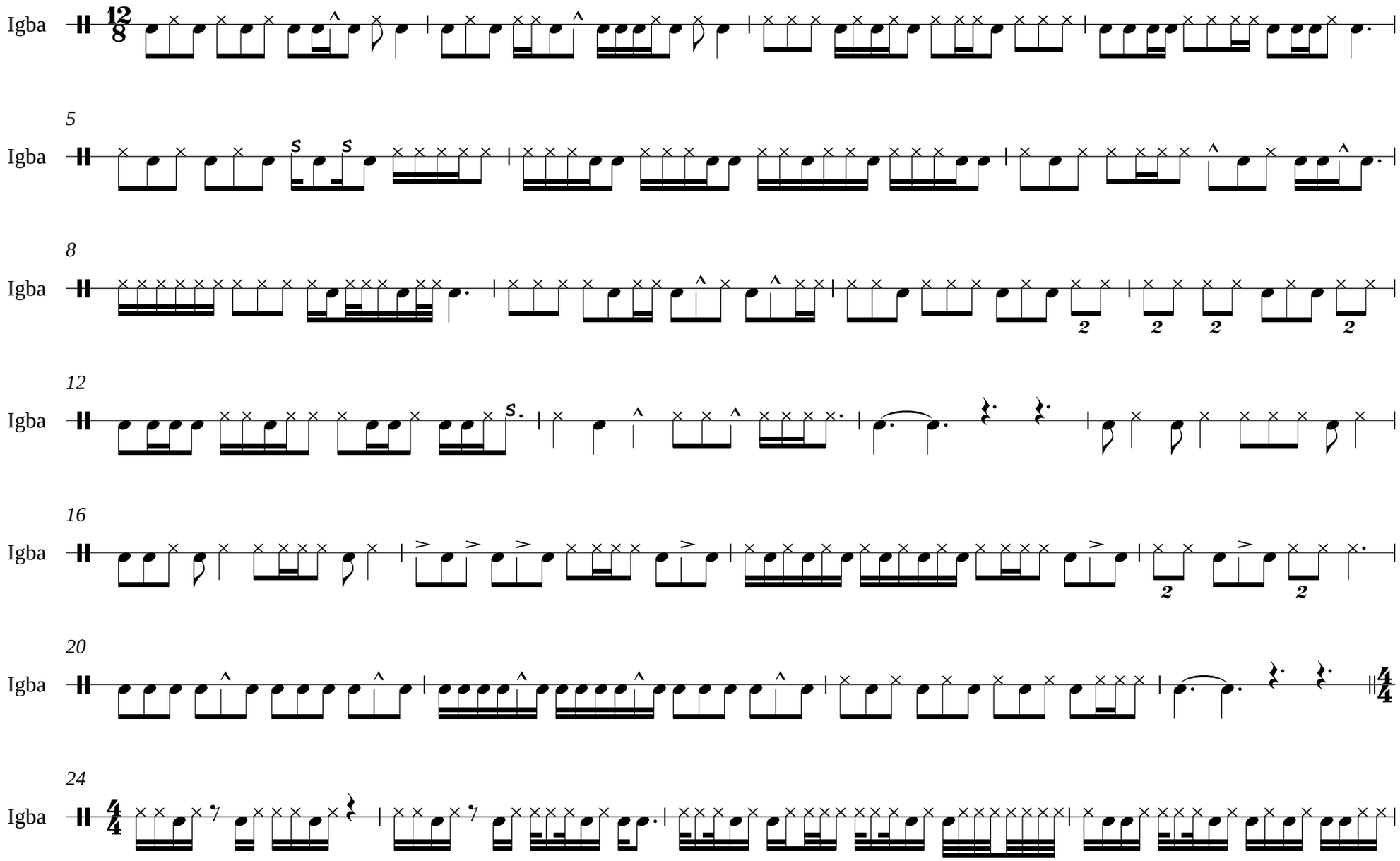
6


161
M. Drum
167
M. Drum
173
M. Drum
178
M. Drum
180
M. Drum
Hei Hei Hei Hei Hei
Hei Hei Hei Hei Hei Hei
Om!

Onyedimma

Odyke Nzewi

Andante



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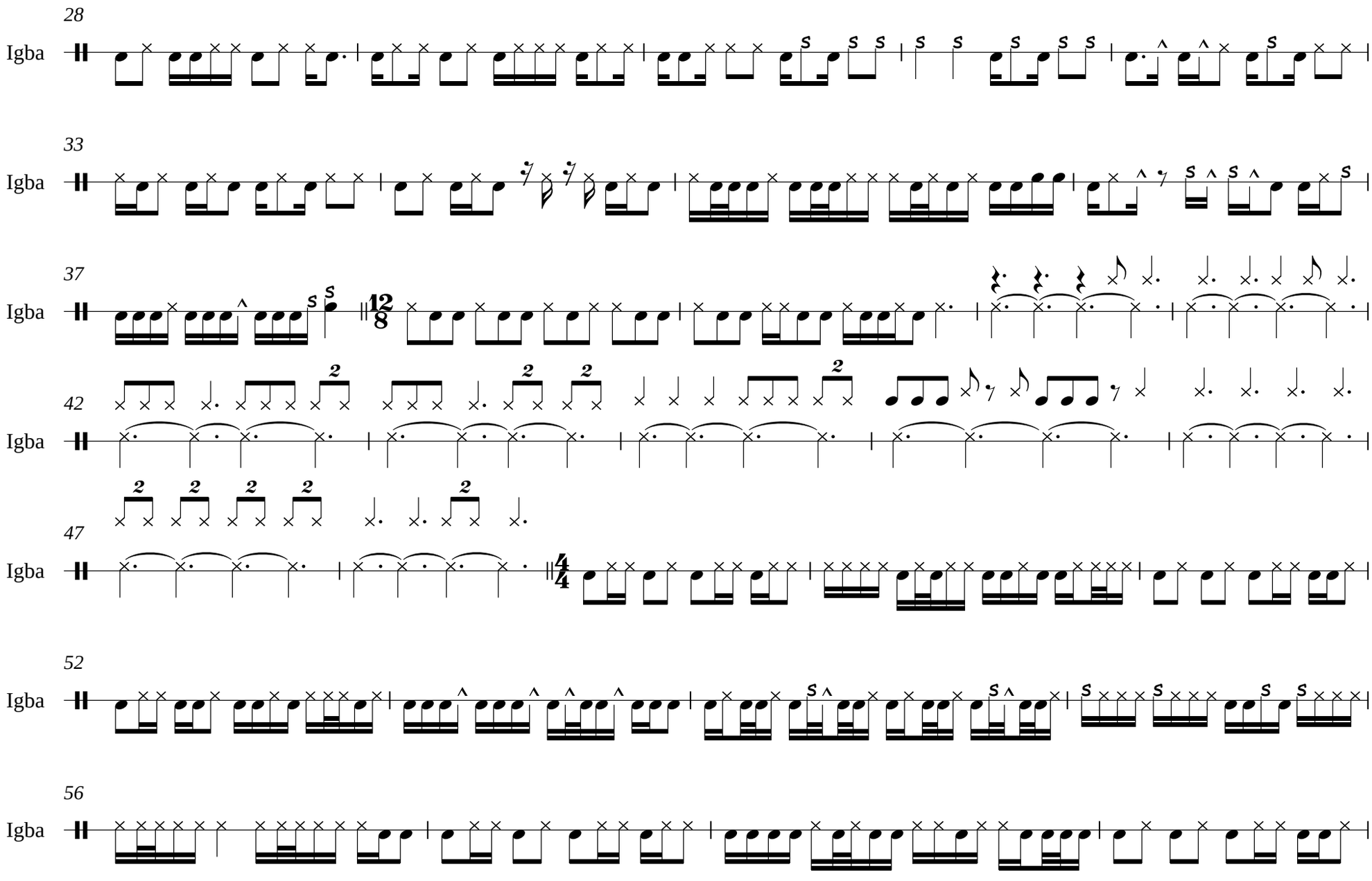

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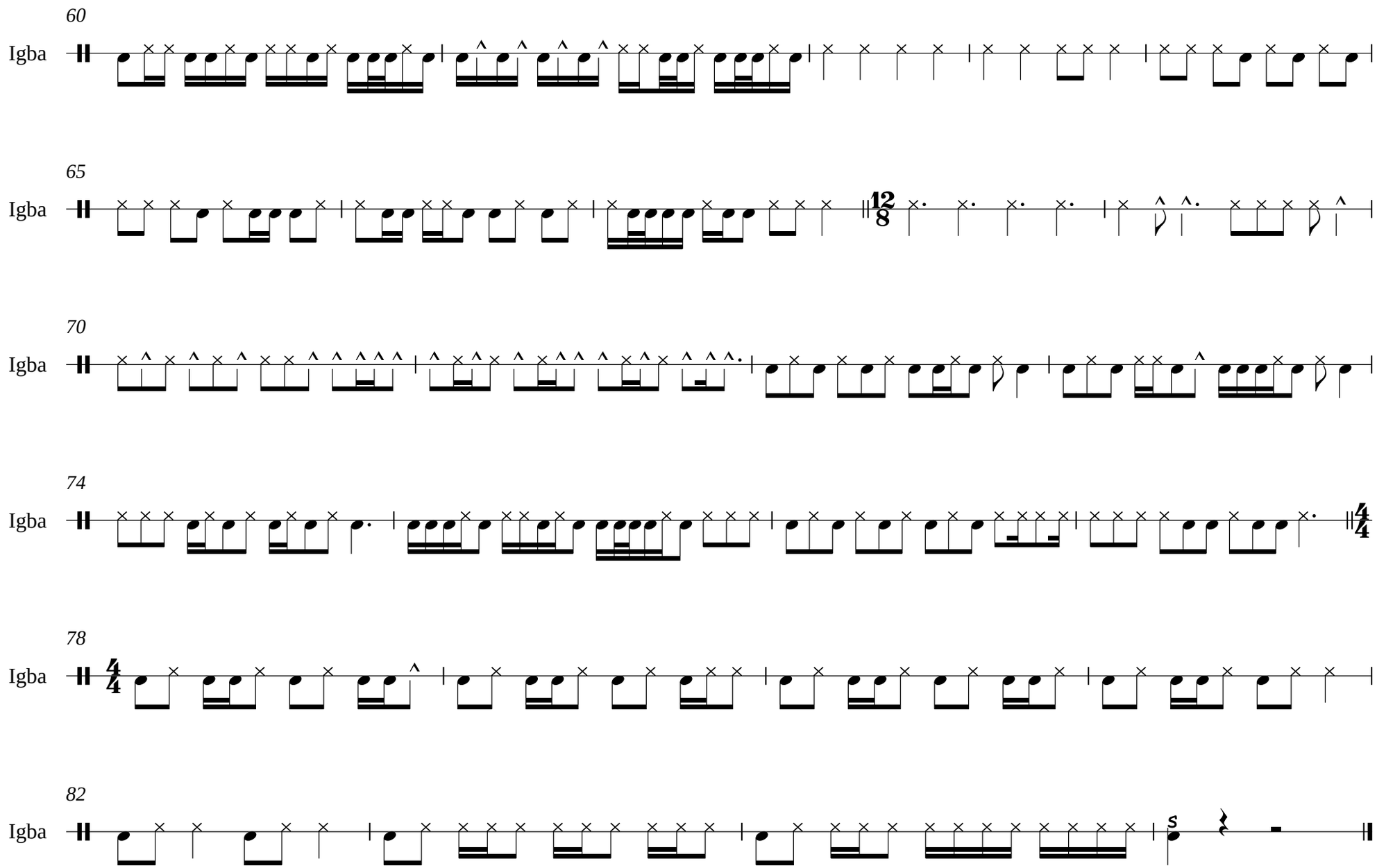
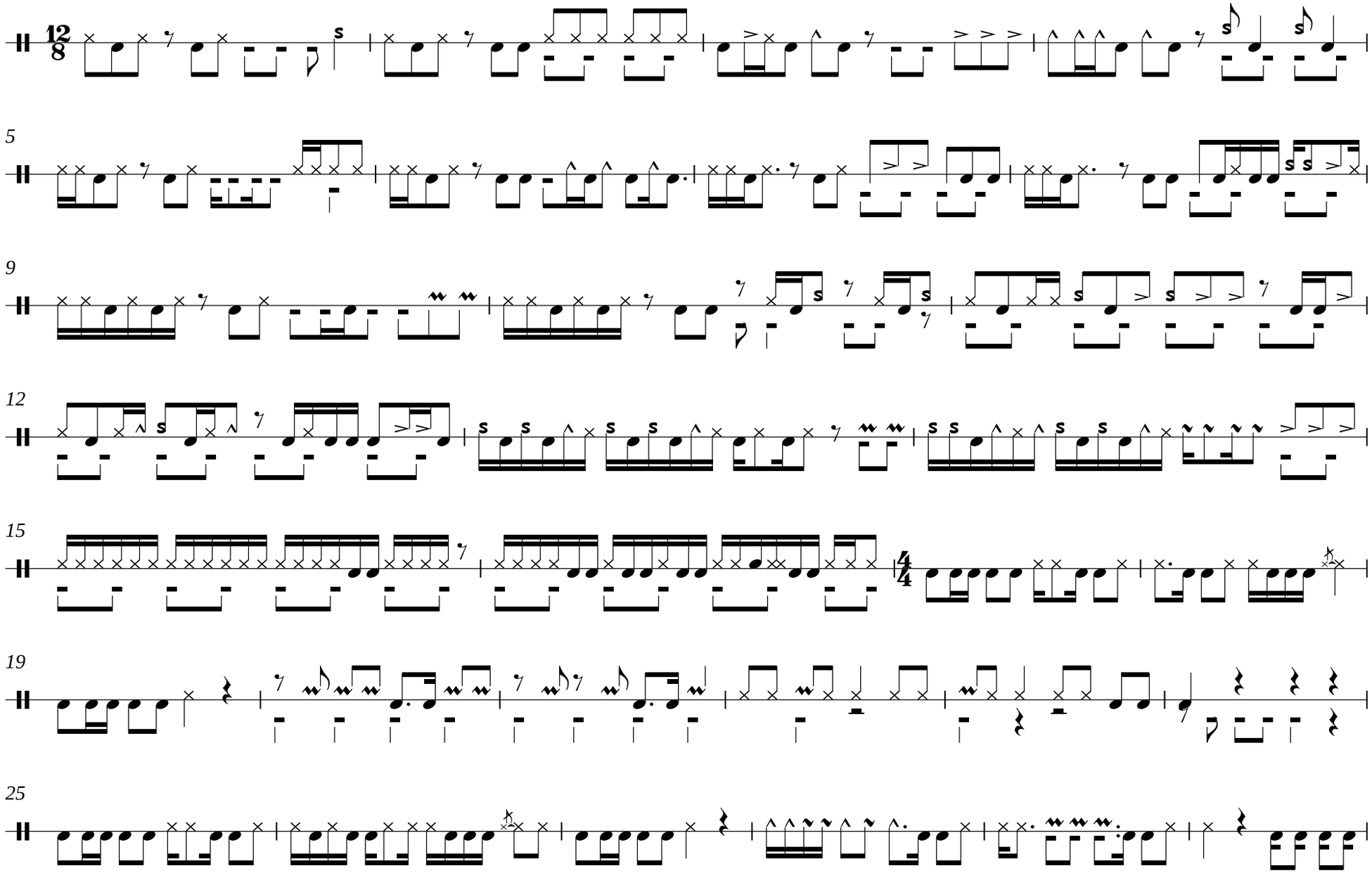


Akasa Dance

Meki Nzewi



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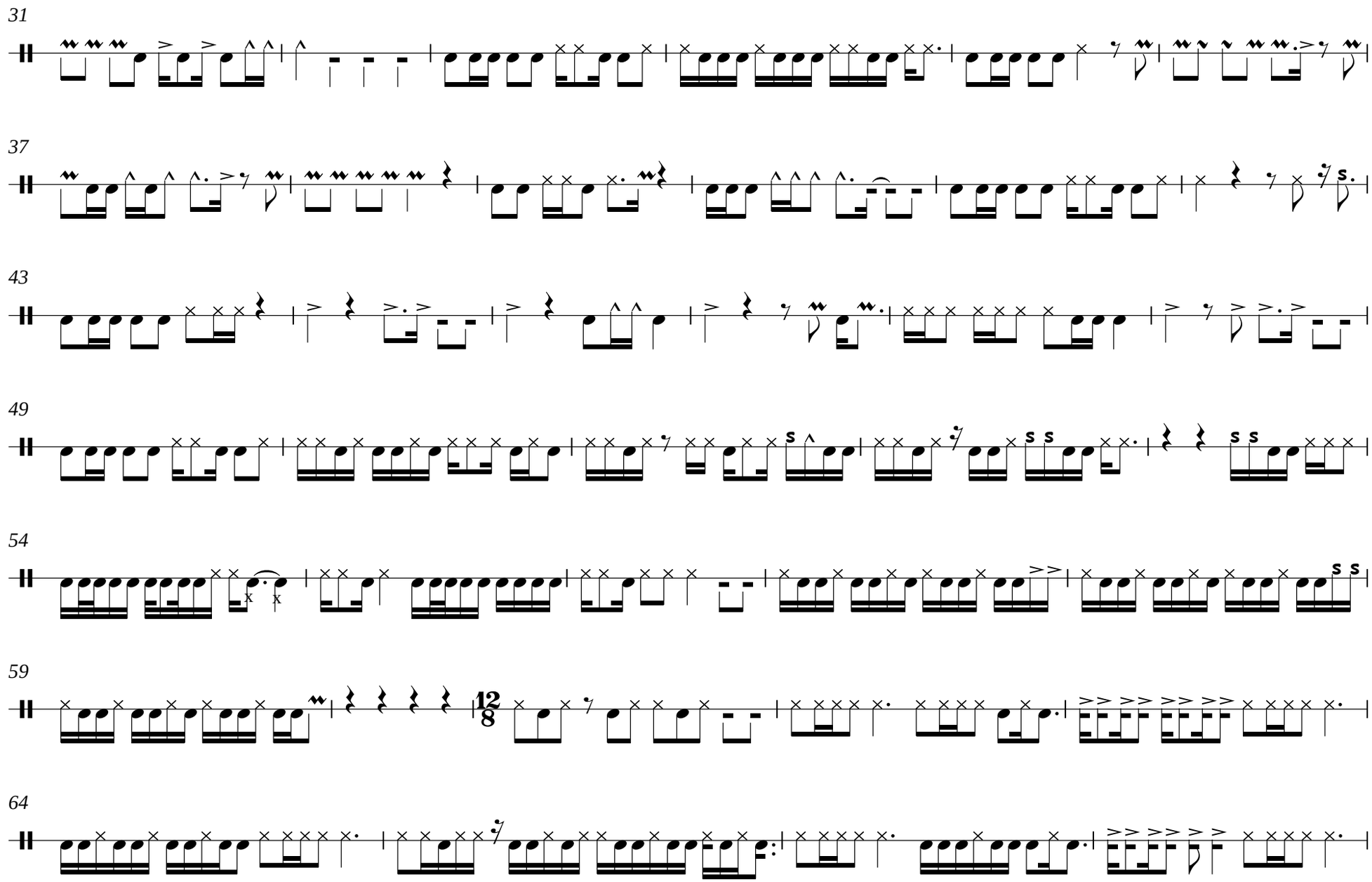

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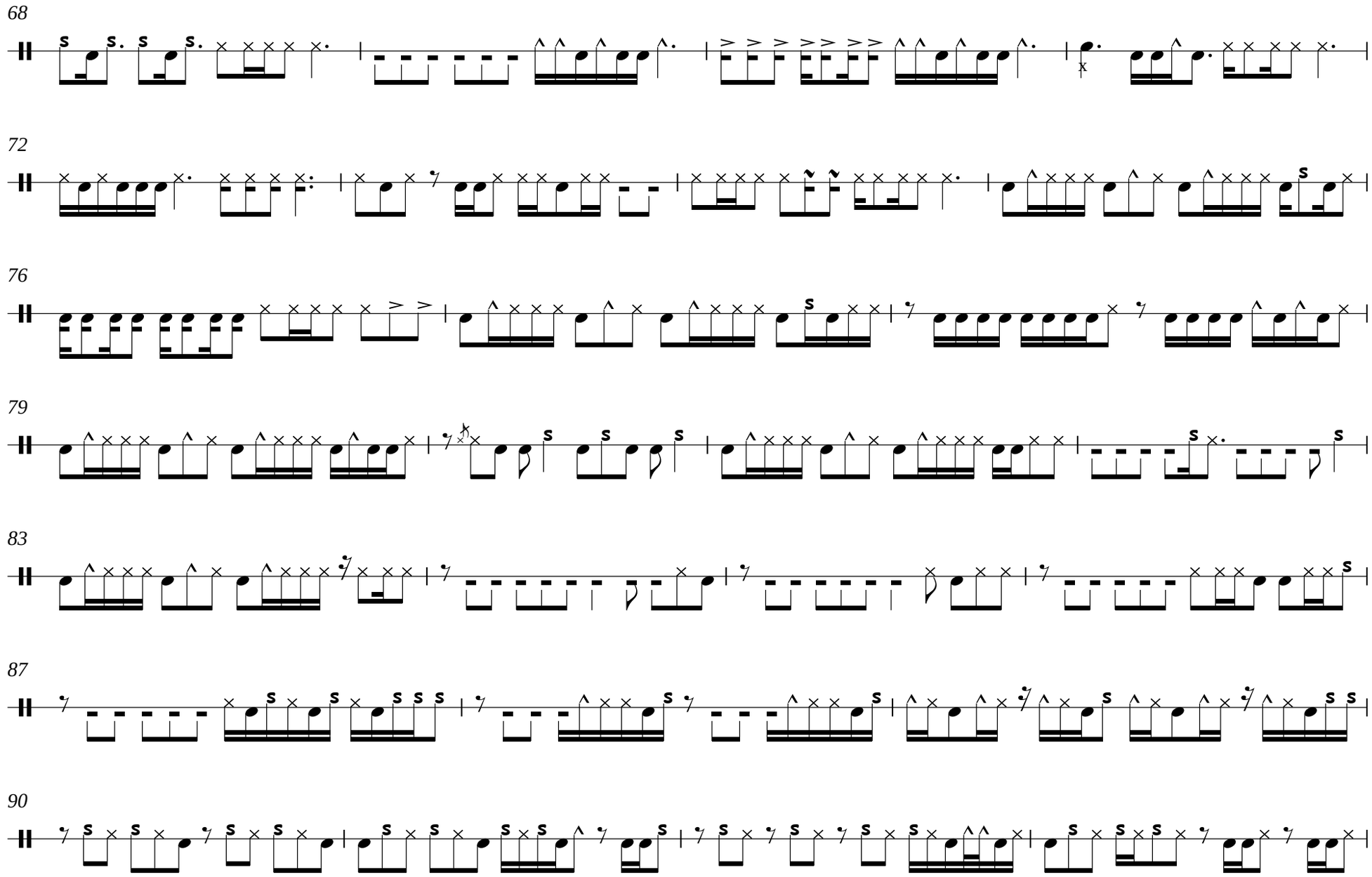

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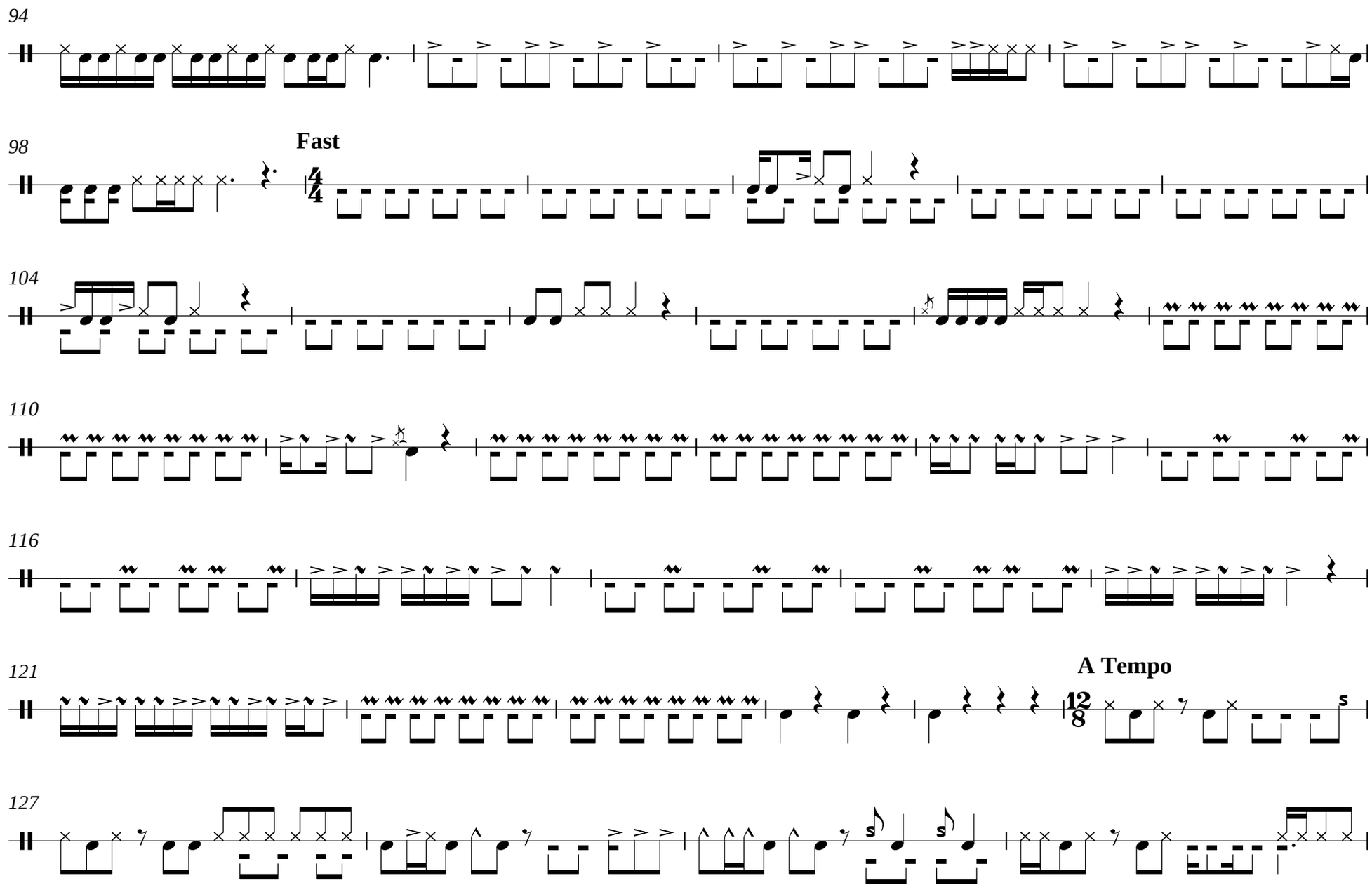
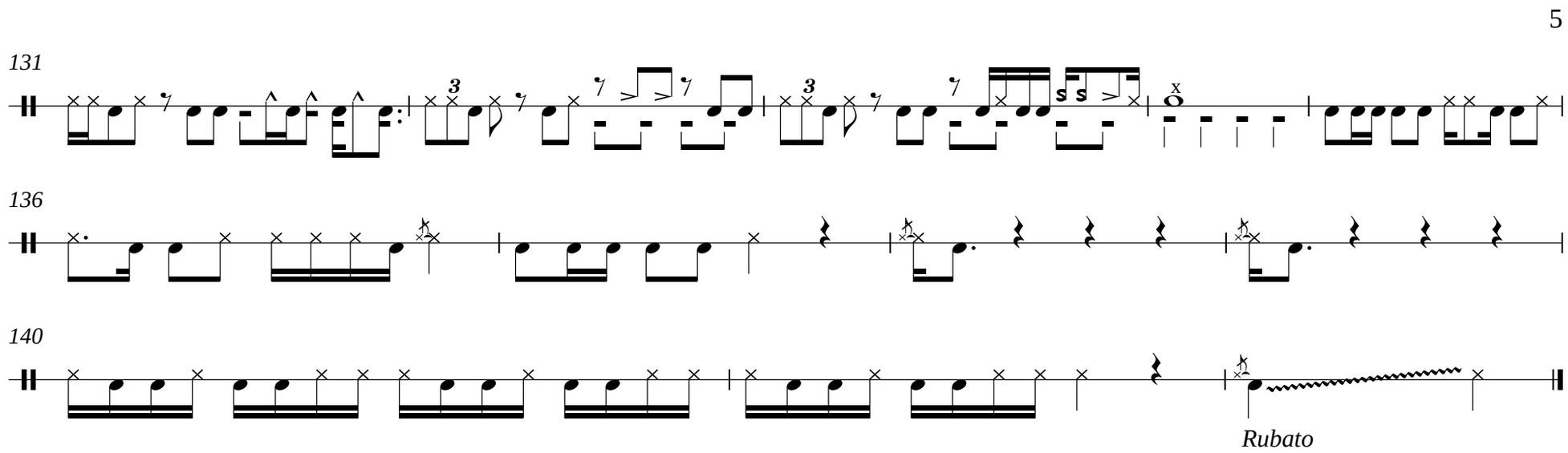
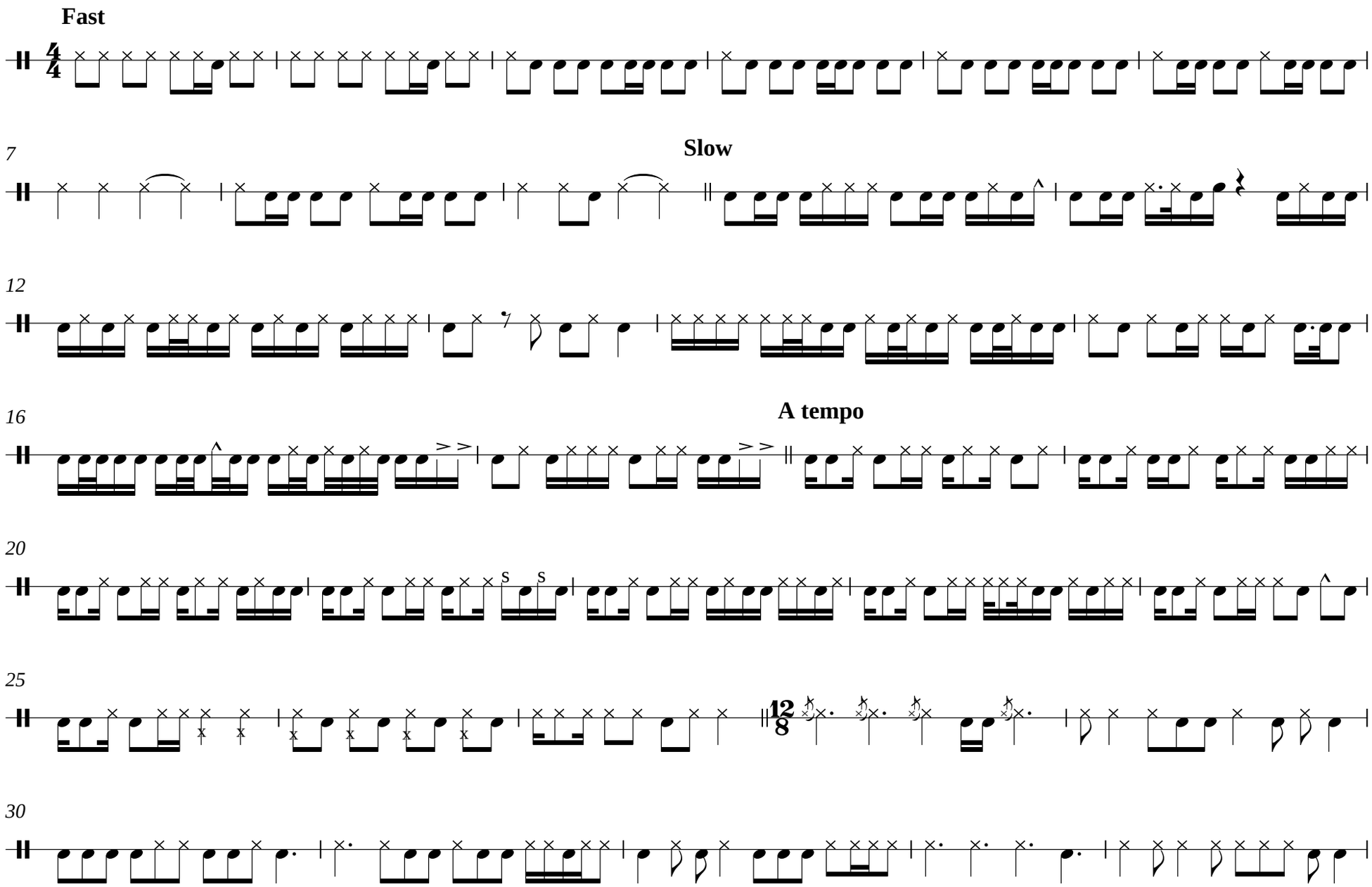



5
131
136
140
Rubato

Egwu n' Amu

Odyke Nzewi



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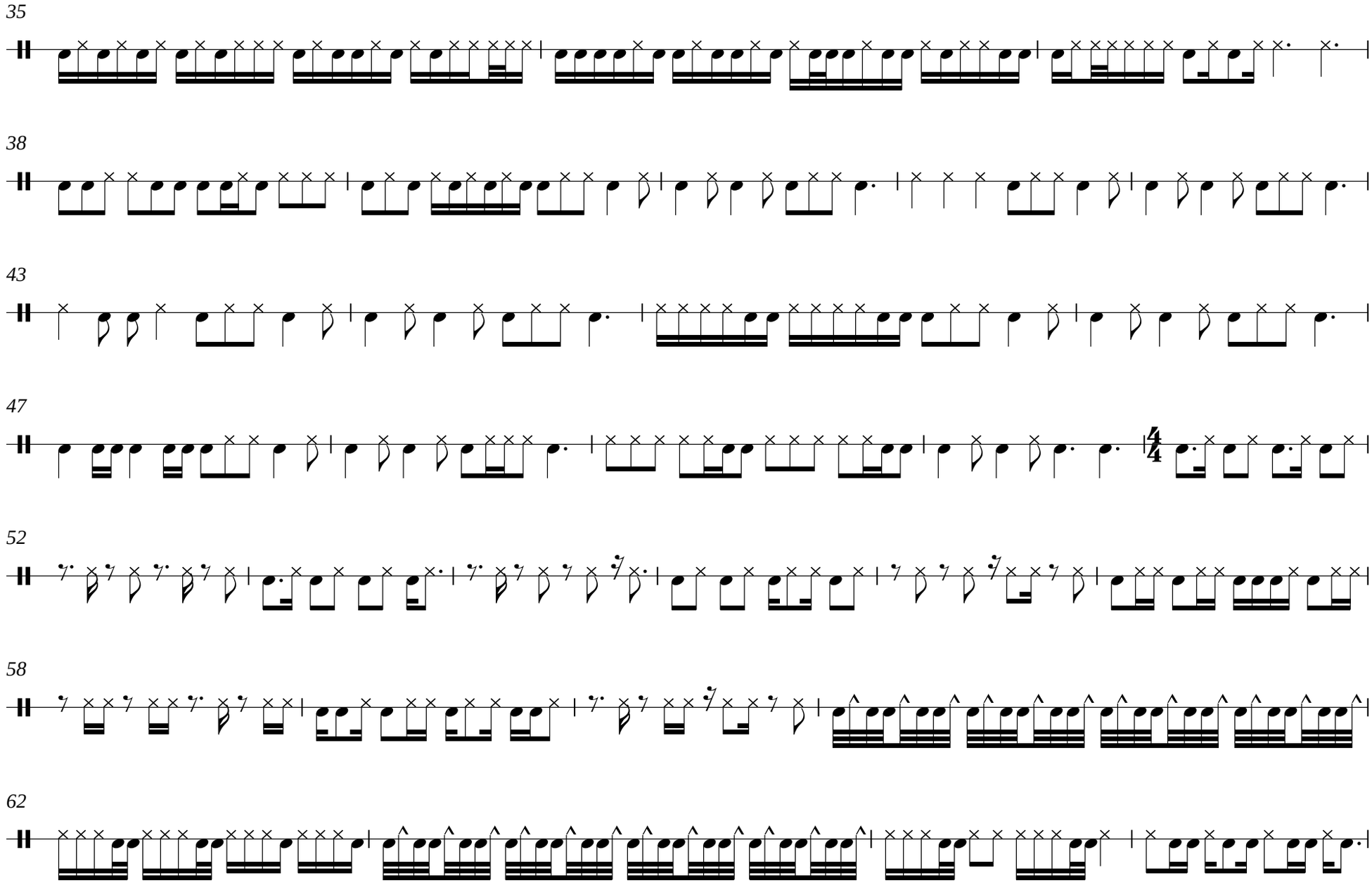
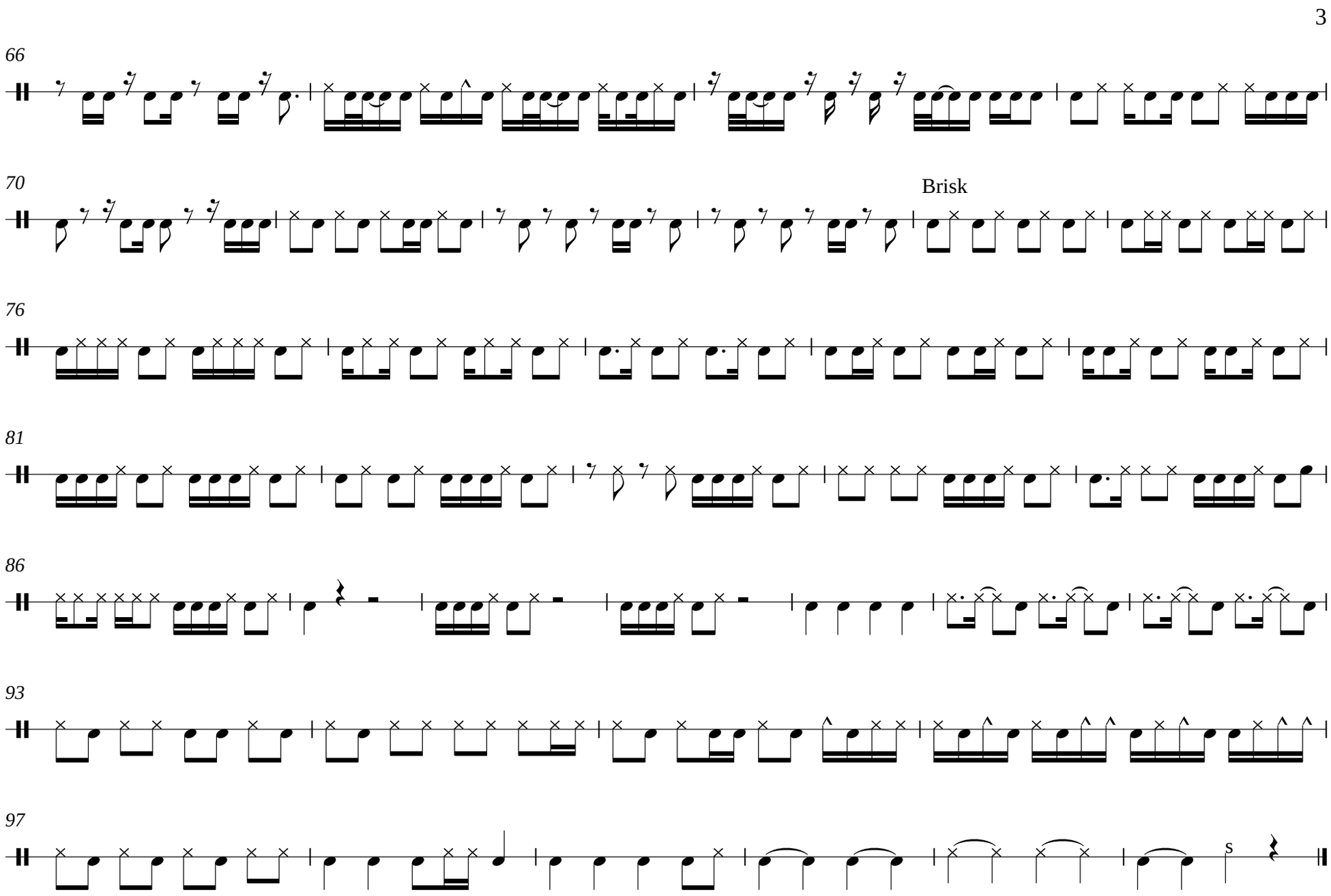



3
66
70
Brisk
76
81
86
93
97
s

Drummistic piano solos

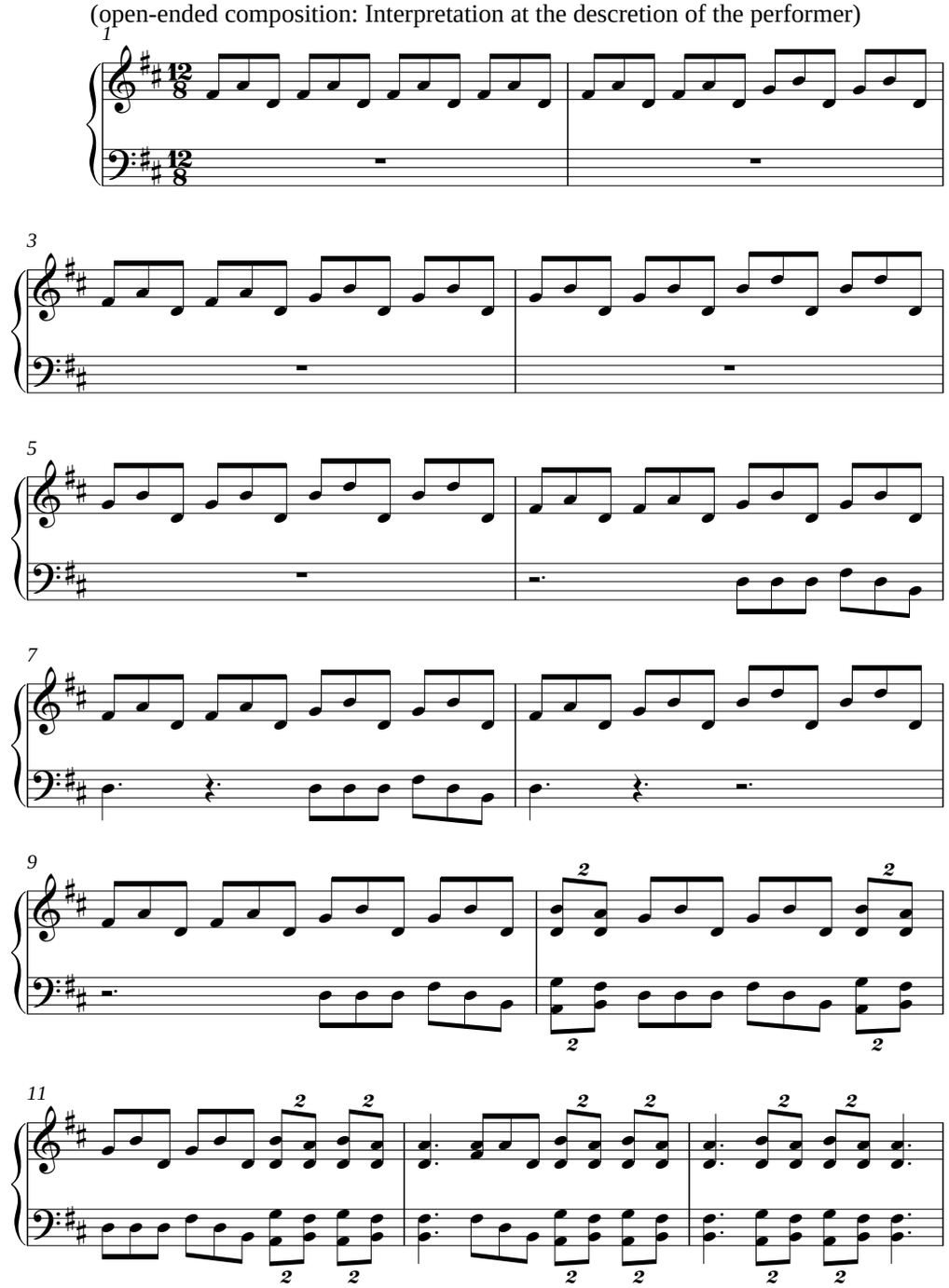
Our piano works aim to indigenize the ensemble potential of the instrument, that is, capture the idioms of African drum ensemble music in a piano solo. Hence we term the piano style **drummistic piano**. In the drummistic piano style we therefore have proceeded to indigenize the technical possibilities of the versatile piano in terms of ramifying the peculiar African indigenous structural idioms and syntax of ensemble roles in writing for the instrument. The idiomatic peculiarities of indigenous African drum ensemble music configurations and the melorhythmic idioms pose challenges to the playing technique of a person fixated on the conventional classical piano writing and playing style. Our theoretical procedure is such that the pianist often has to engage a dualistic-play role. In some passages, for instance, the two hands of the performer will be working independently, and yet unify the inter-layered but independent ensemble roles/voices. Only very few pianists have so far been able to dare playing the drummistic piano pieces with technical or interpretative flair. The indigenous African compositional grammar becomes evident when the pianist undergoes the psychological reorientation imperative for tackling a novel approach to the classical piano technique.

2

Omaledo

Meki Nzewi

(open-ended composition: Interpretation at the descretion of the performer)



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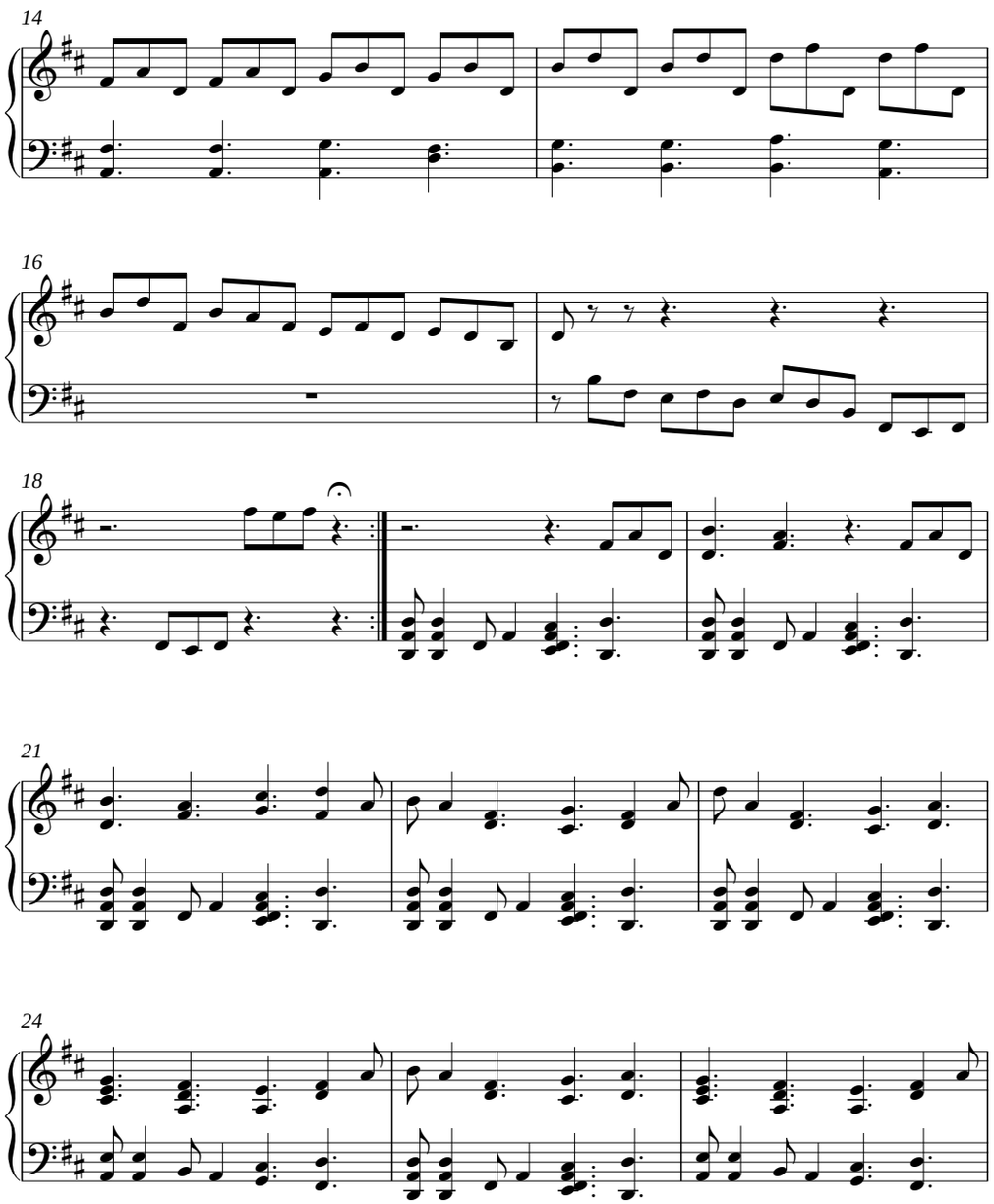

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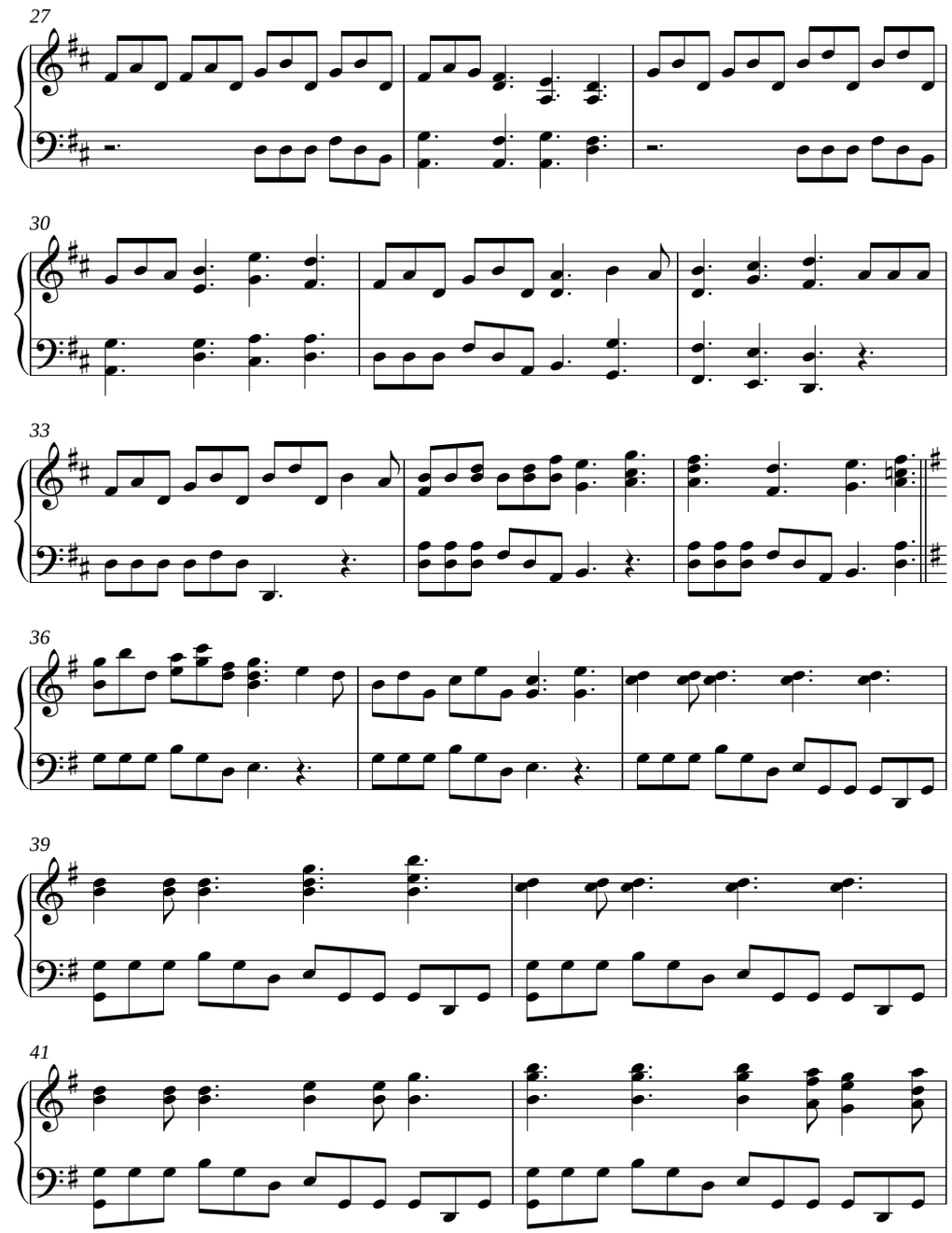


5

43

46 Adagio

48

50

52

54

6

56

58

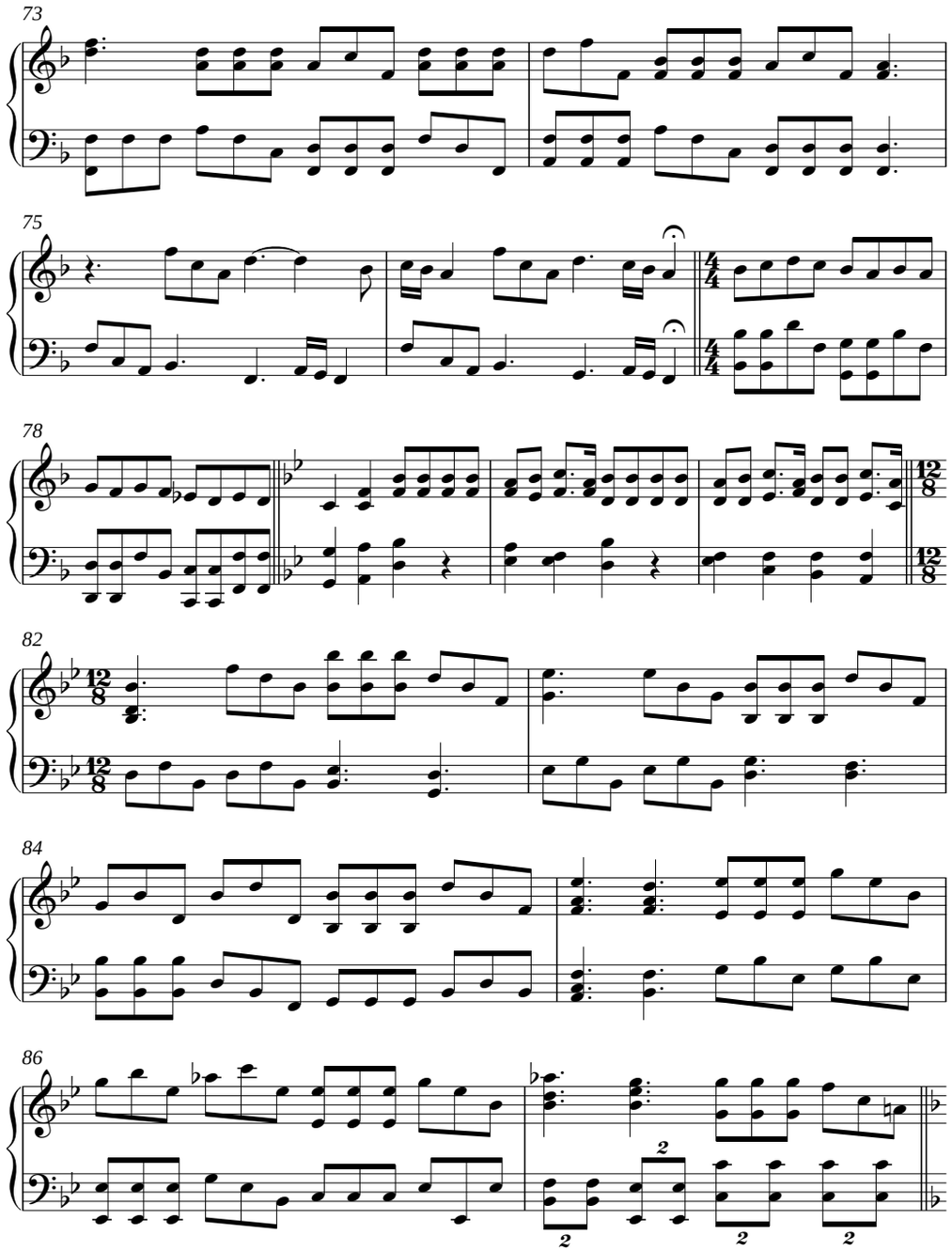
60

63 Allegretto

67

71

7



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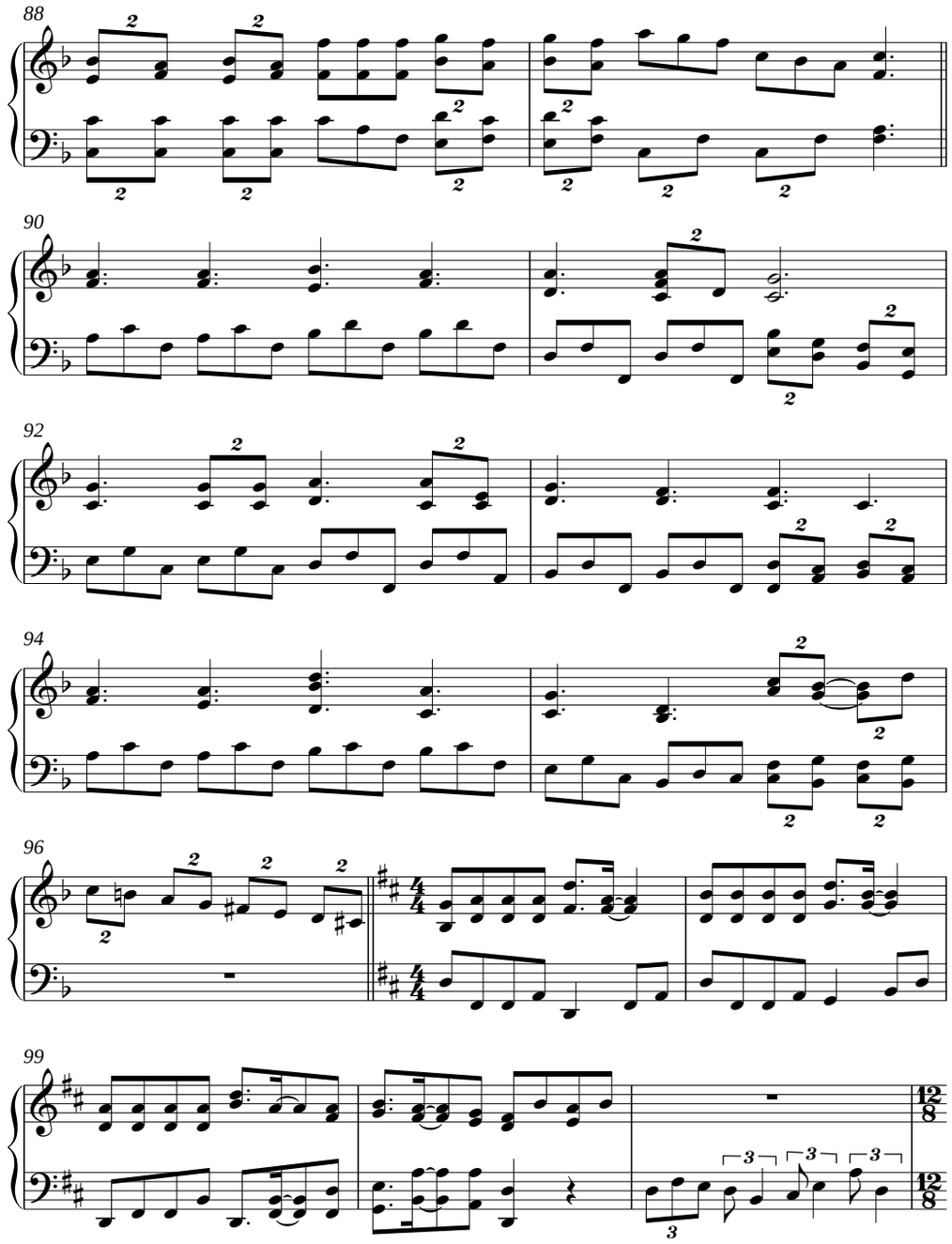
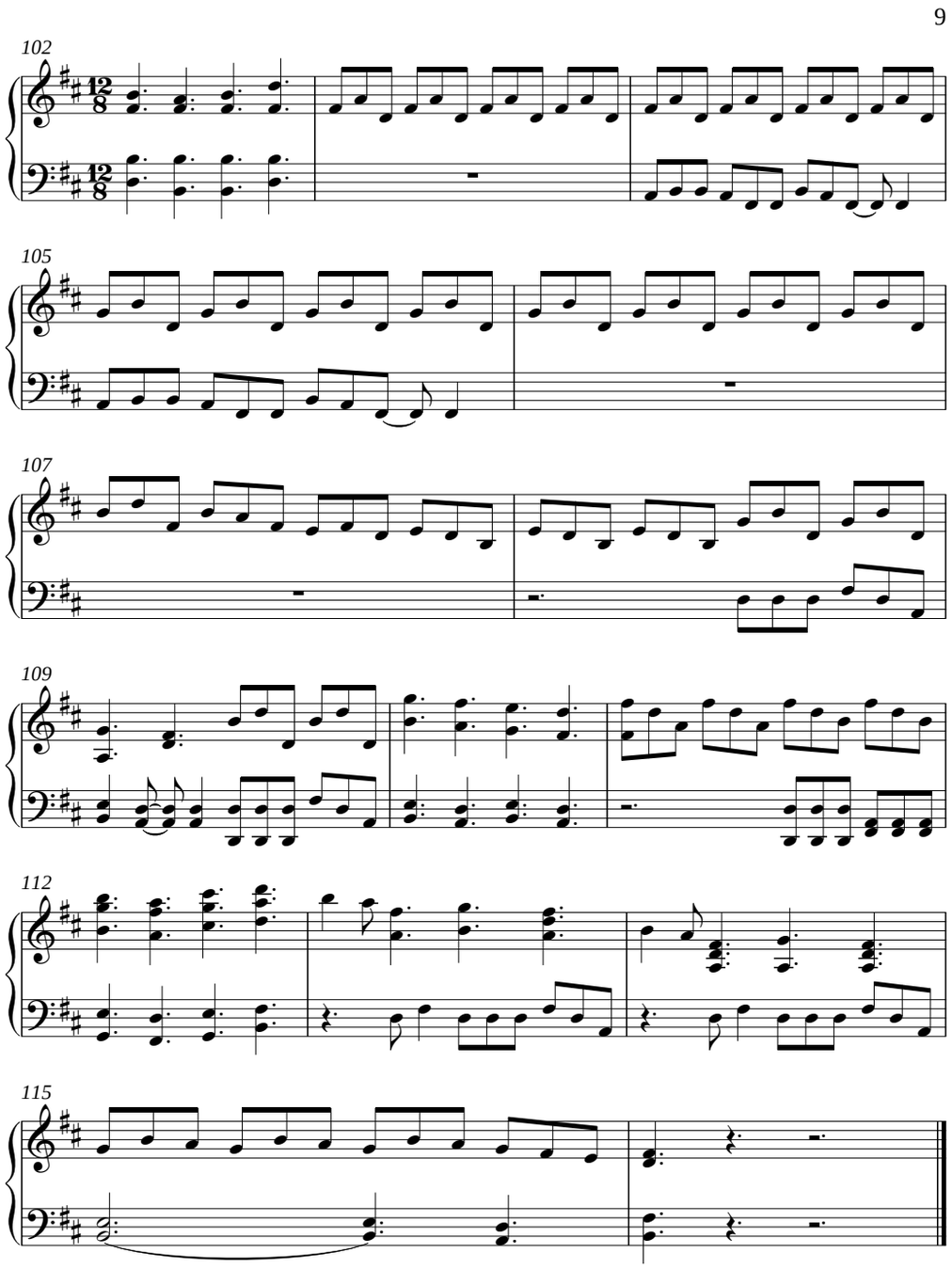
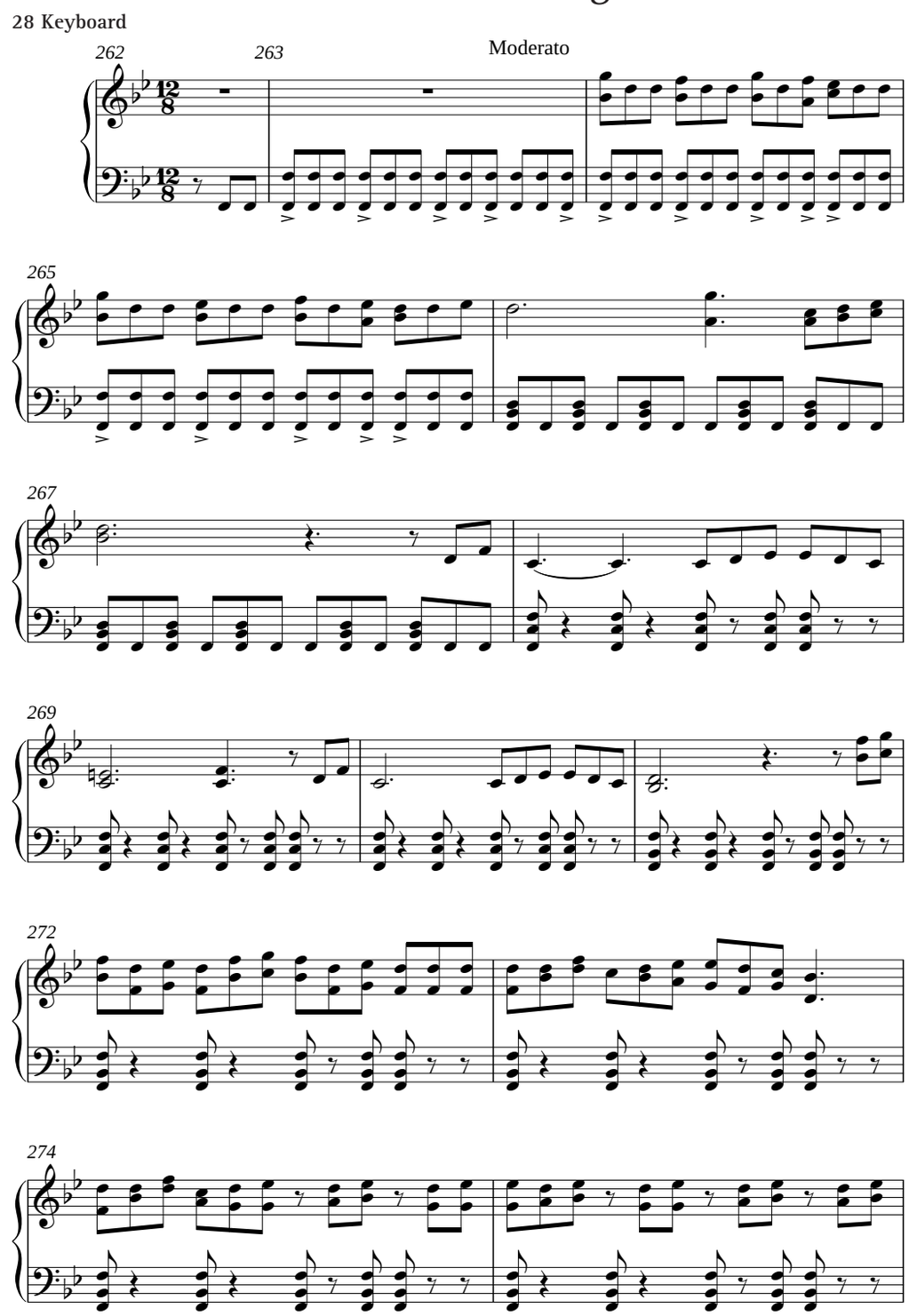
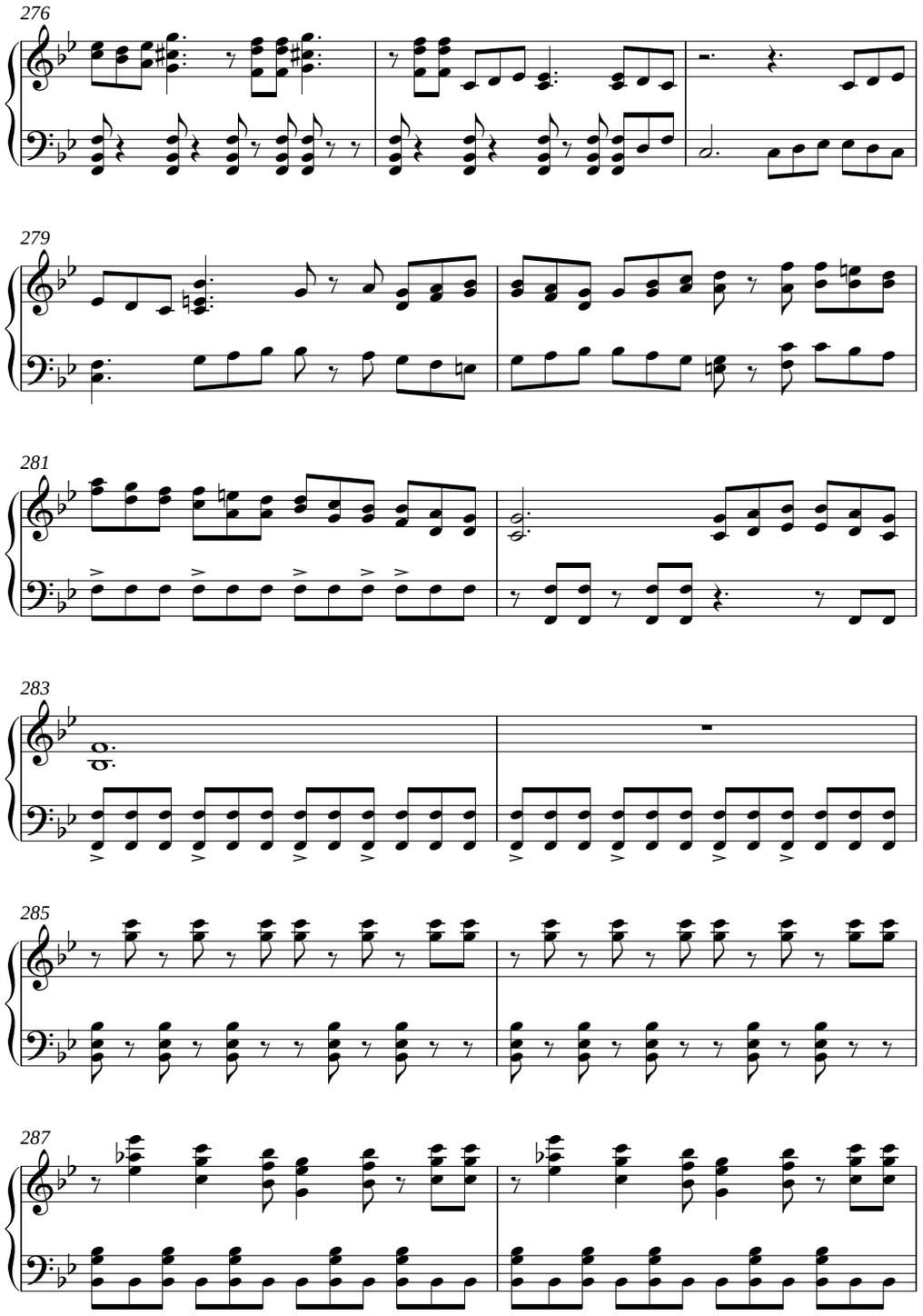




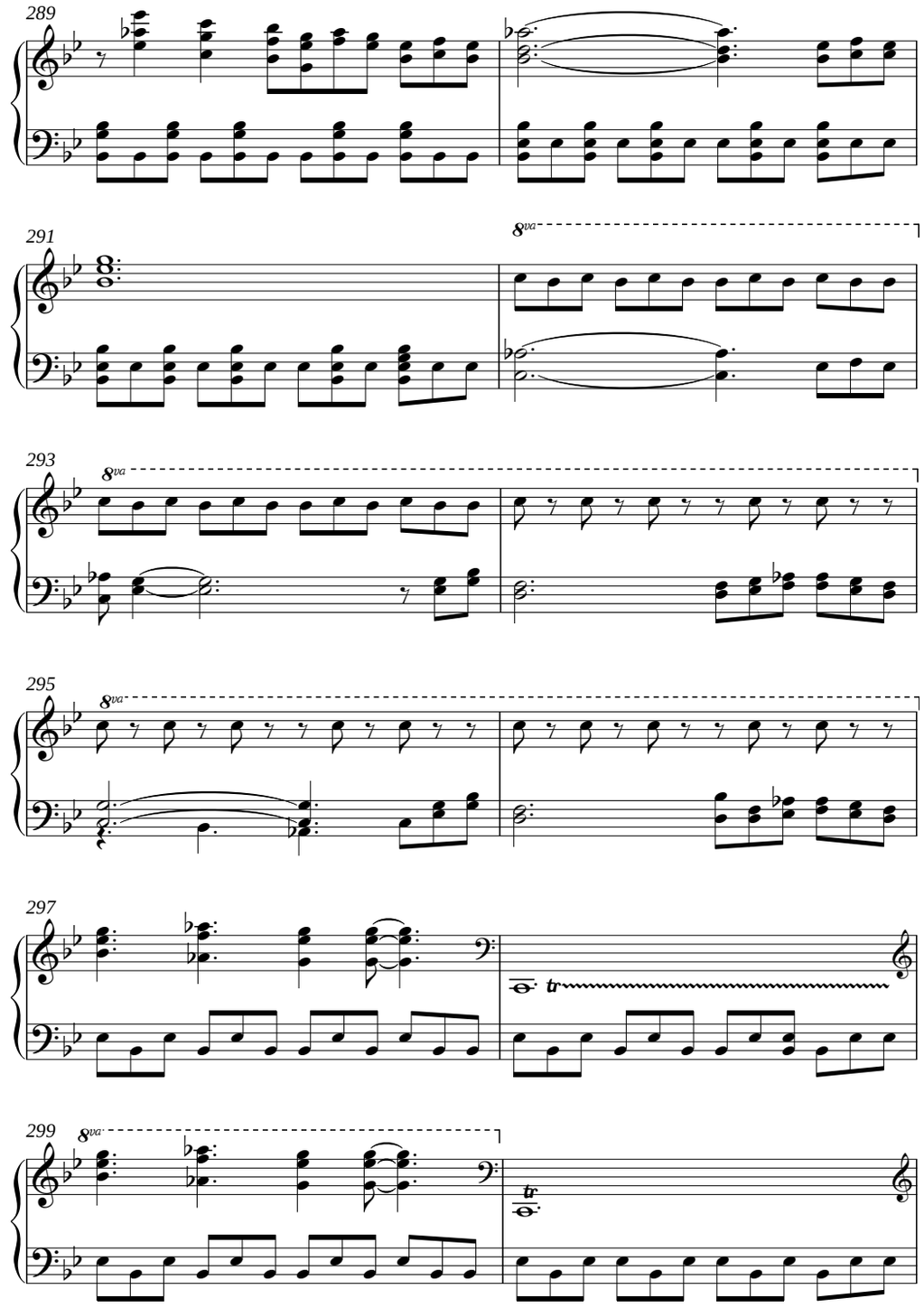
Intermezzo: “Searching No. 2”



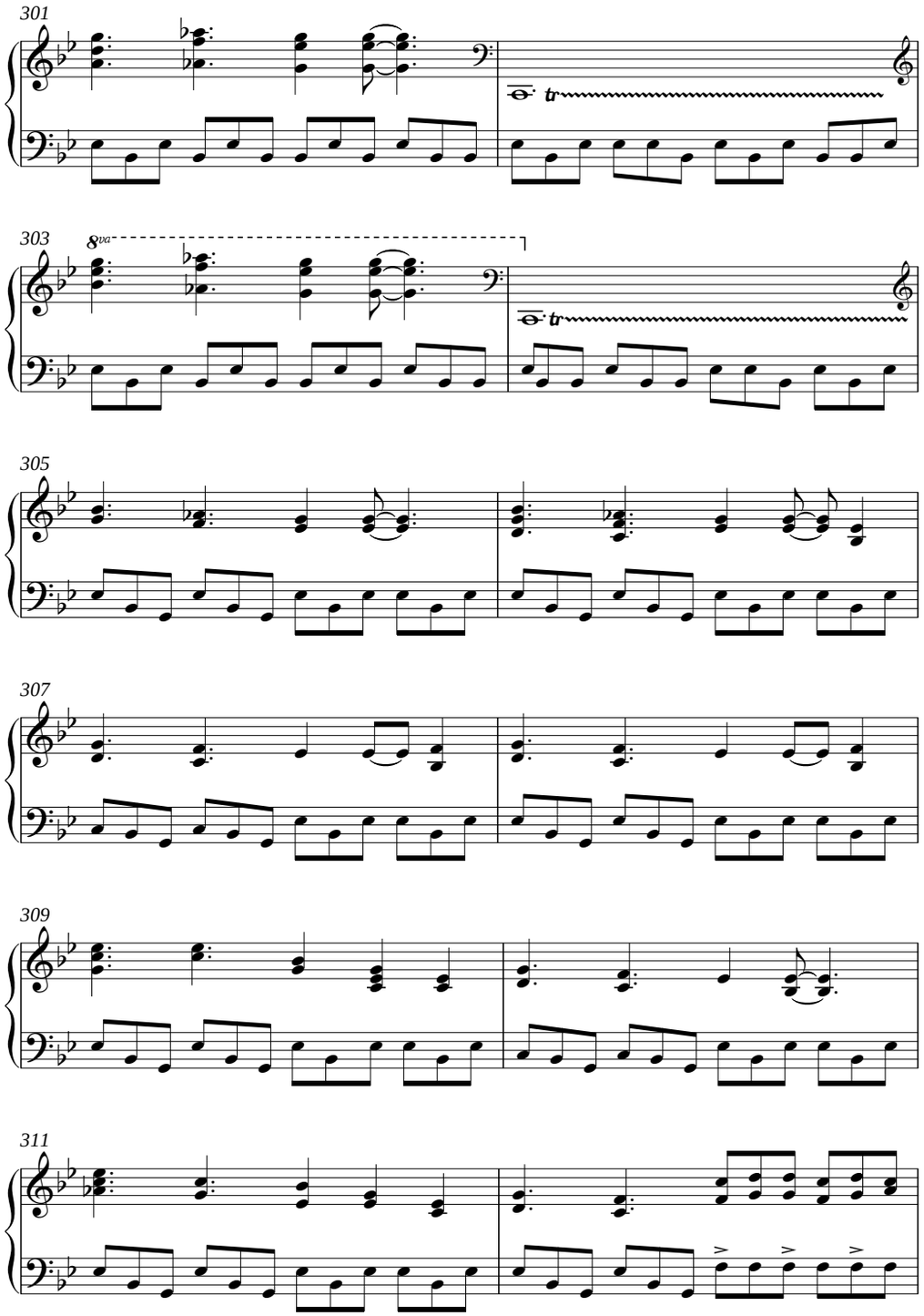
29


276
279
281
283
285
287

30


289
291
8va
293
8va
295
8va
297
tr
299
8va
tr

31



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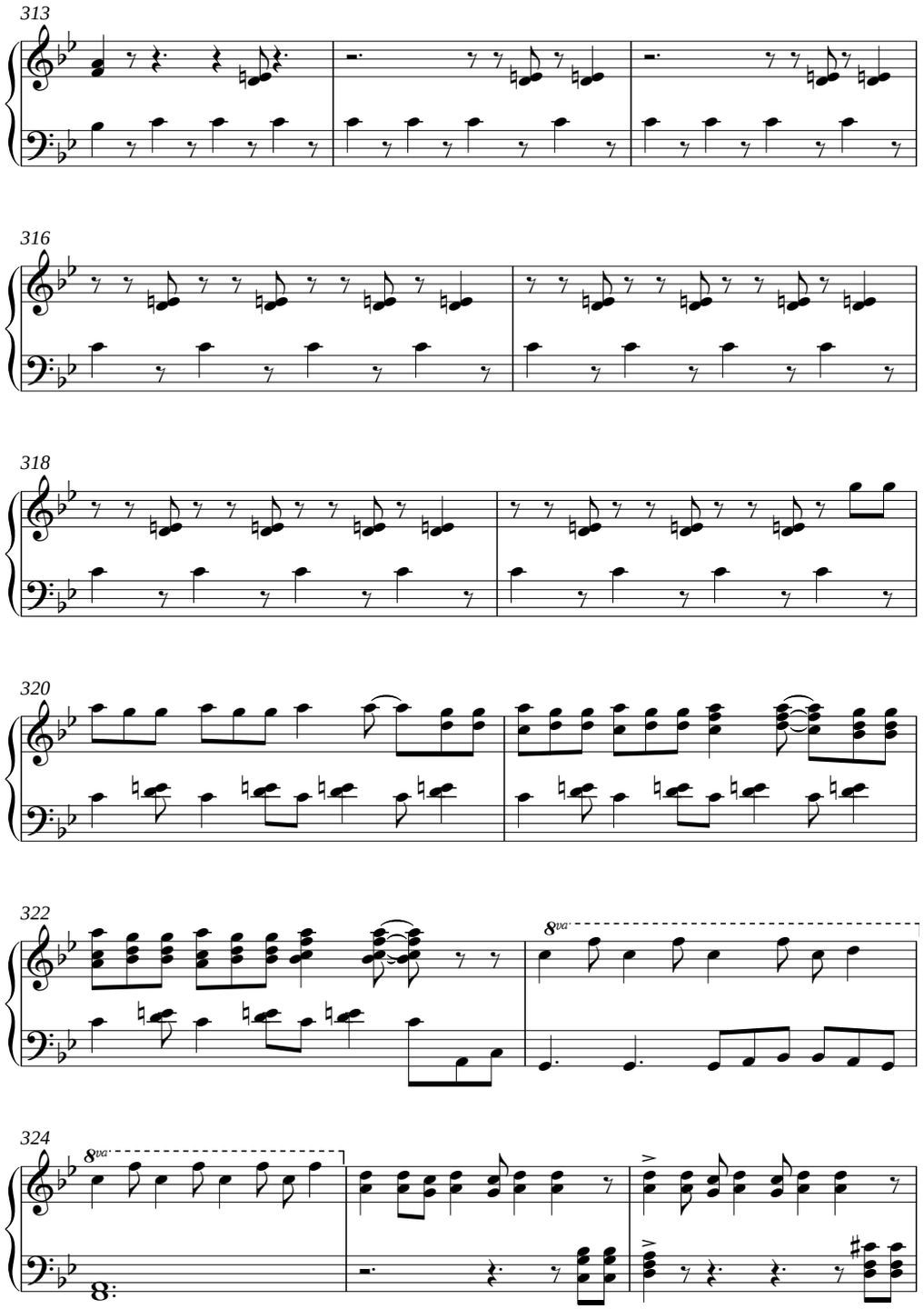

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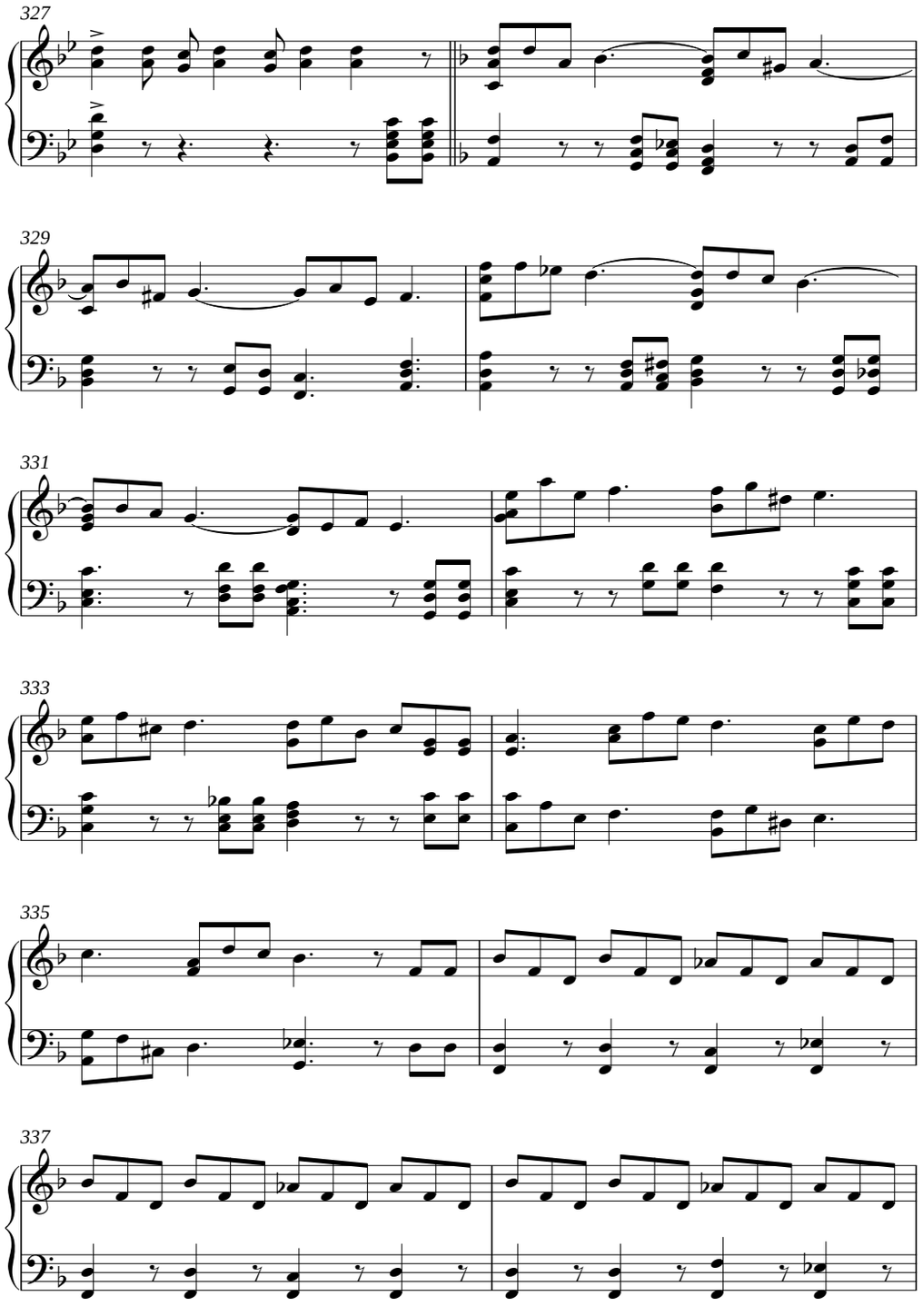
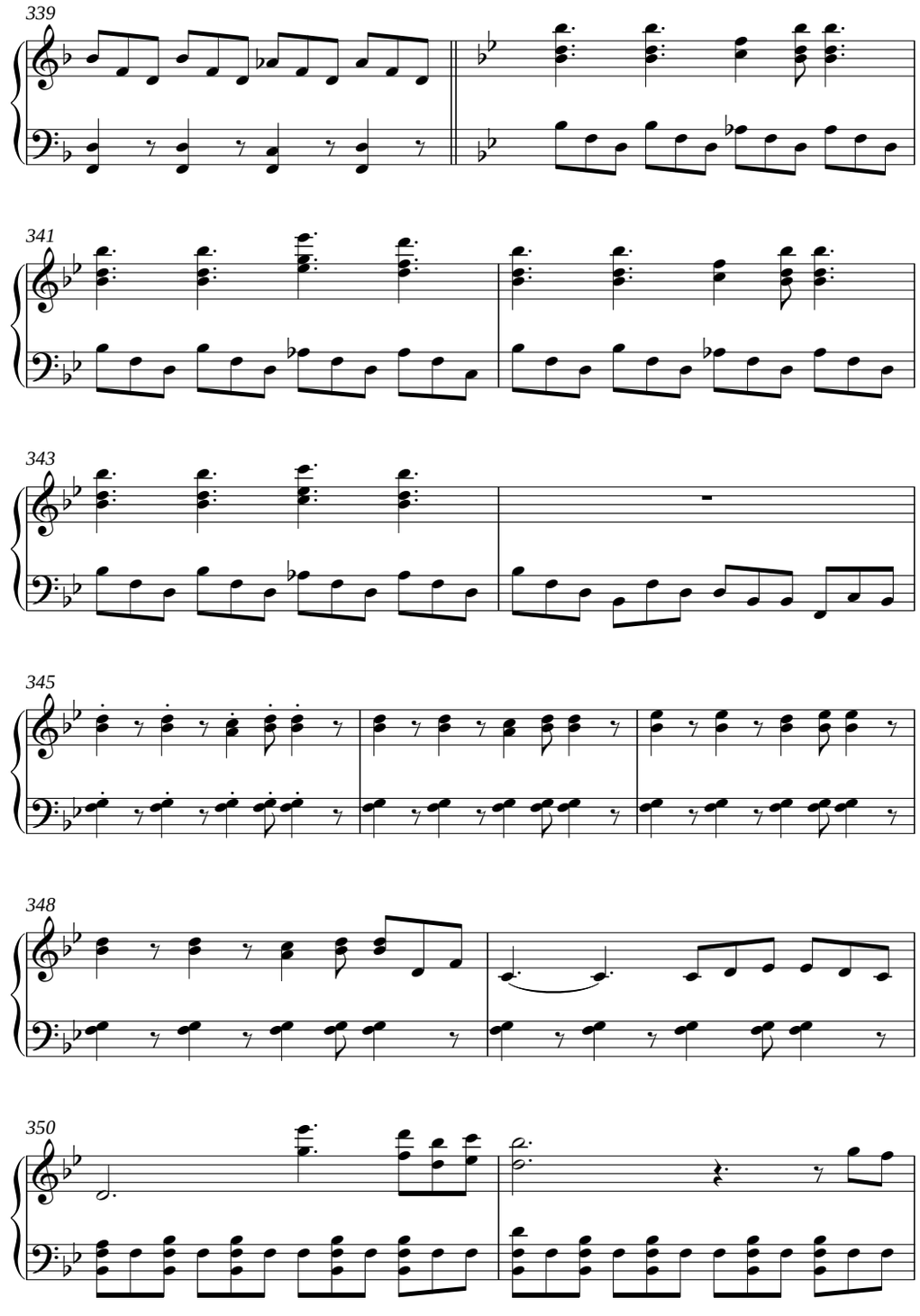
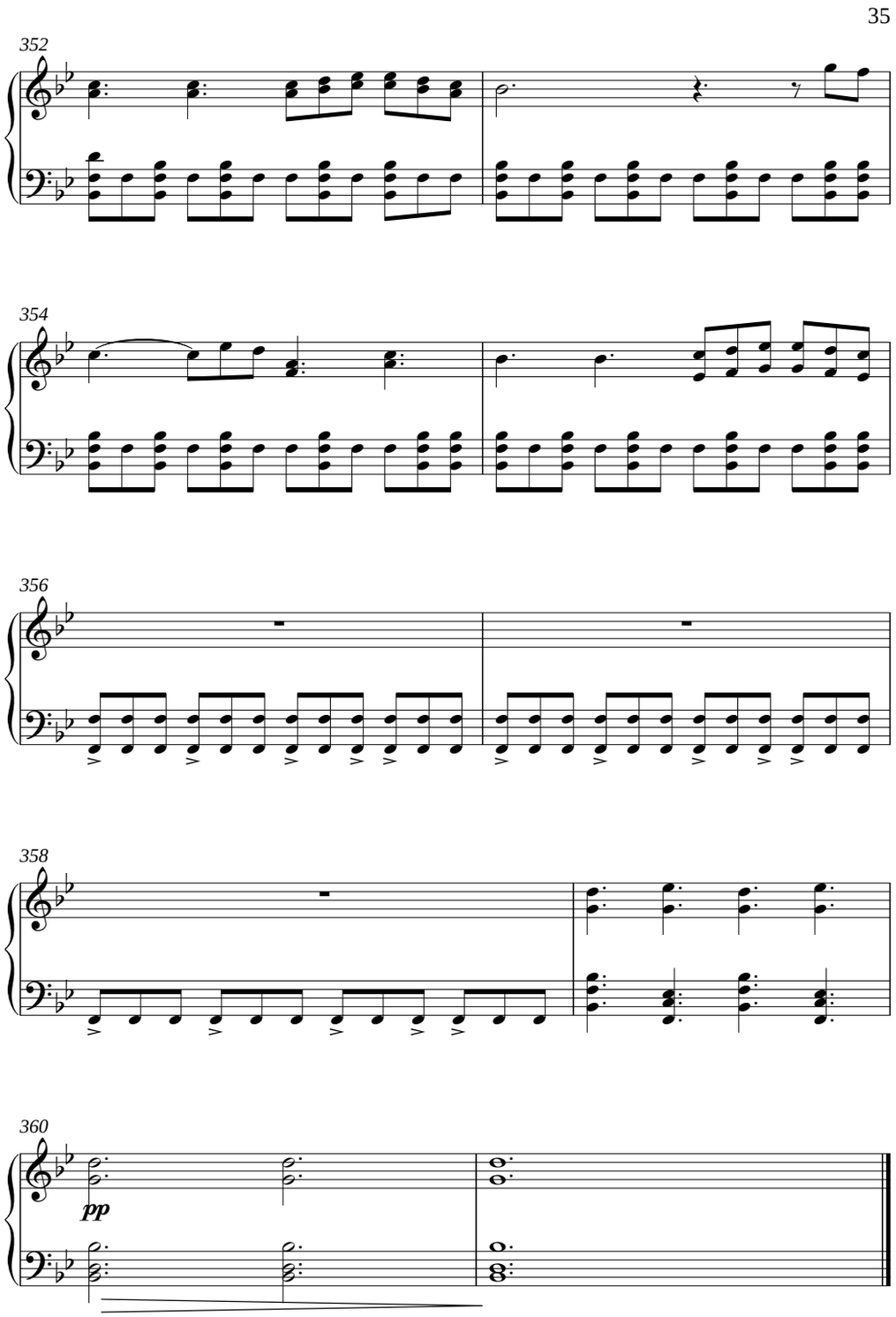
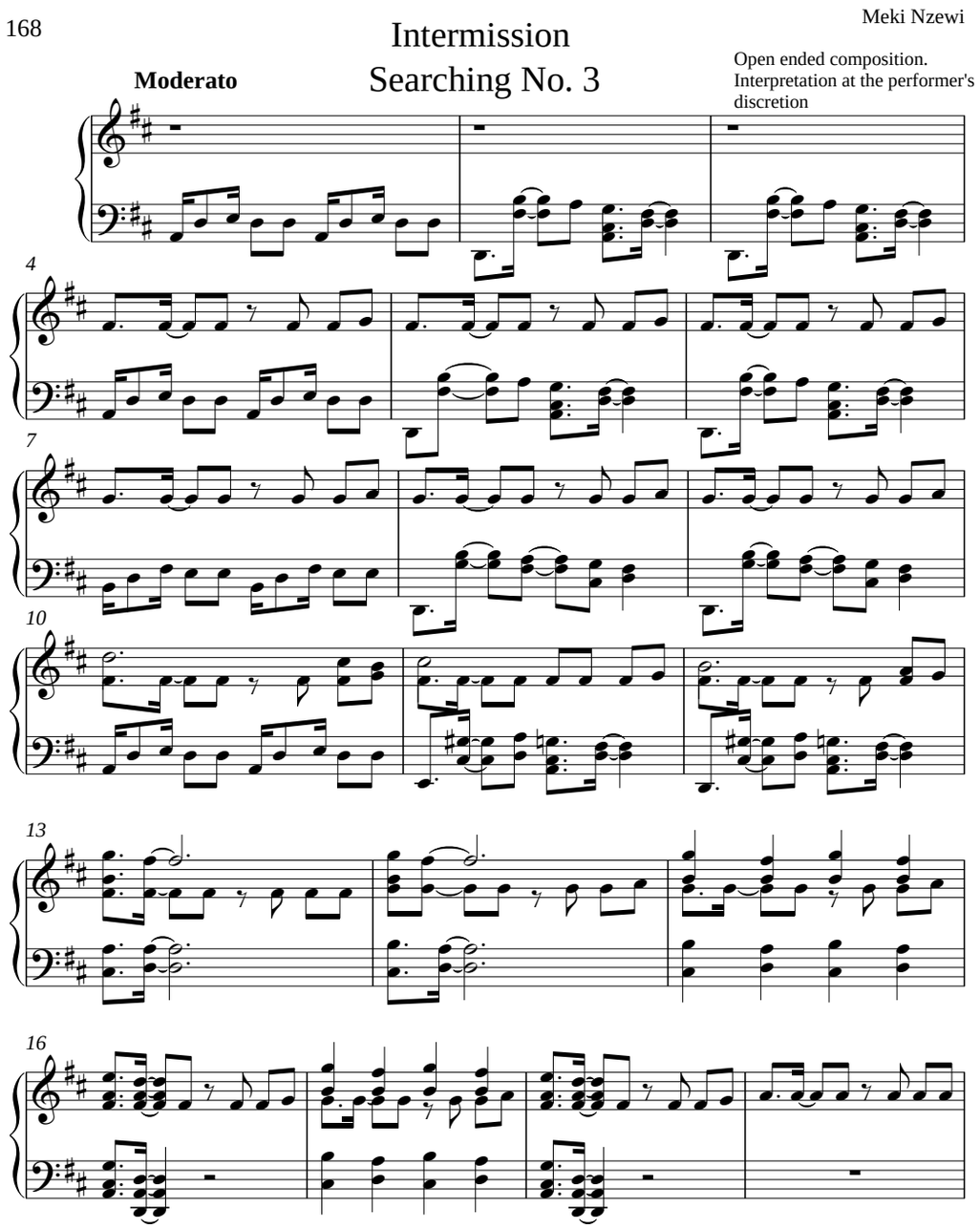


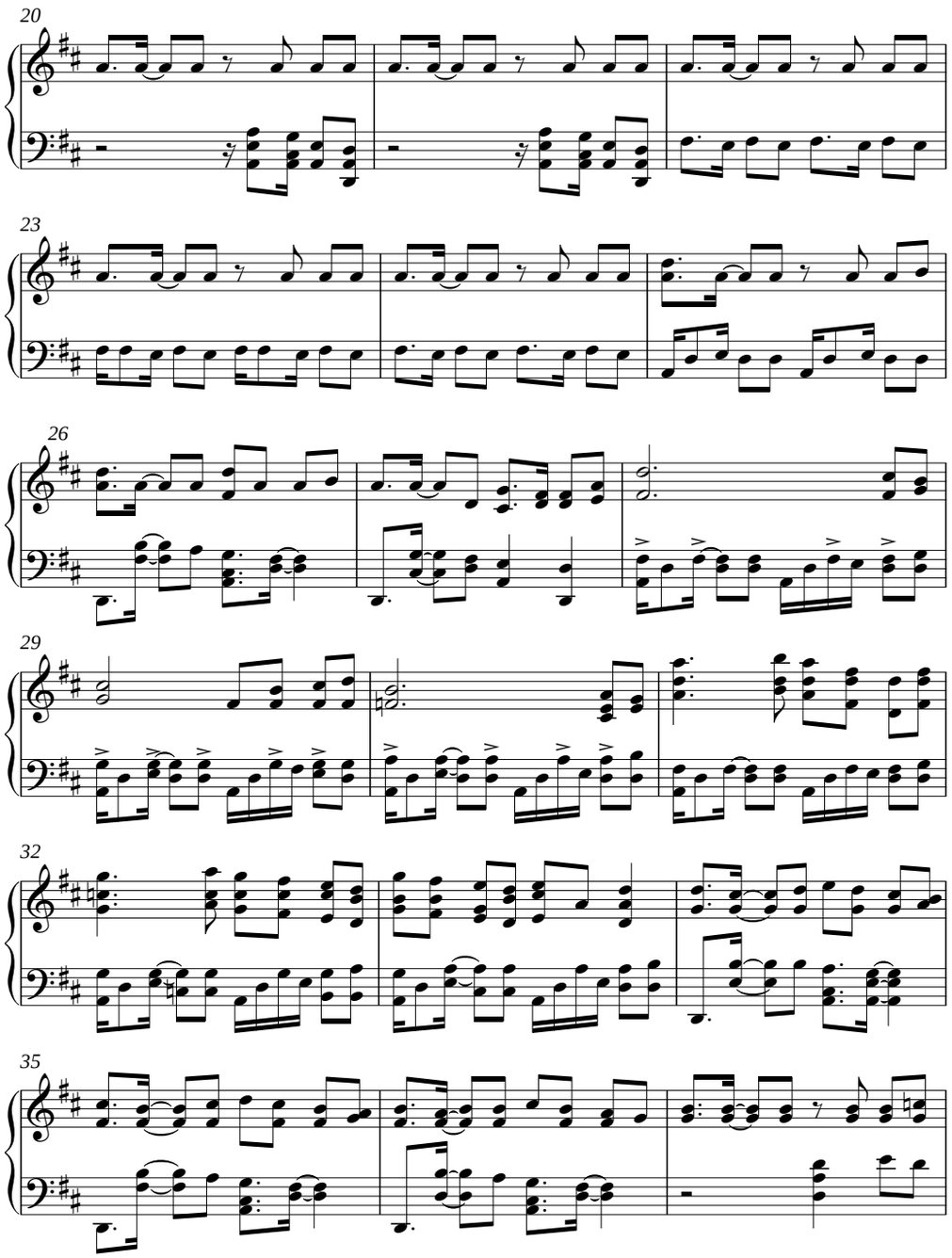
34




35
352
354
356
358
360
pp


168
Intermission
Searching No. 3
Meki Nzewi
Moderato
Open ended composition.
Interpretation at the performer's
discretion
4
7
10
13
16

169



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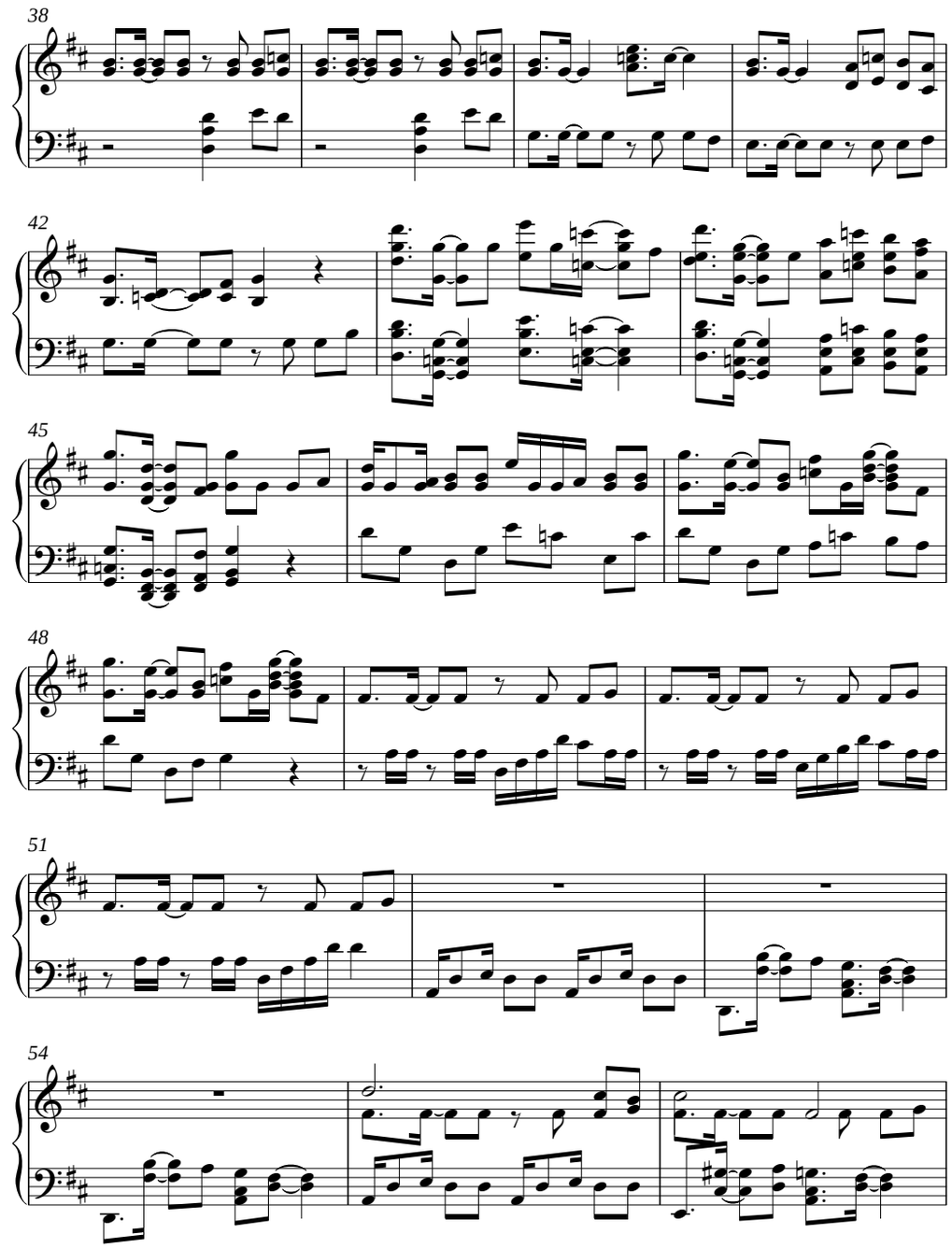

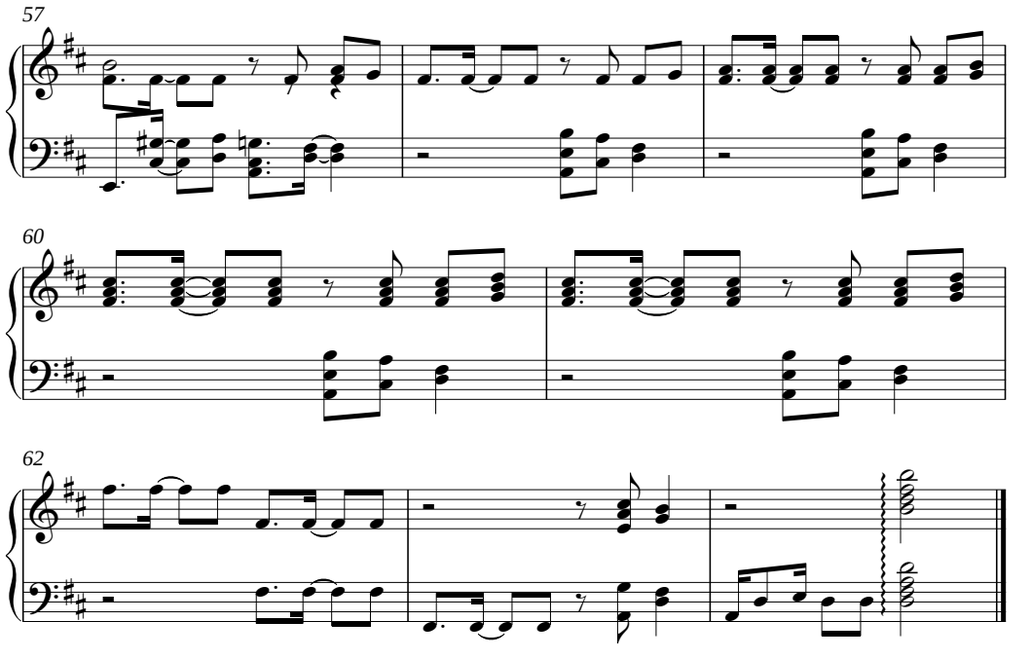
57
60
62